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THE OFFICIAL GAMES MAGAZINE OF BEST BUY

ISSUE 02 | SEPTEMBER 2010



METROID: OTHER M

Worth the hype?

WE TELL YOU! PG. 64

FALLOUT: NEW VEGAS



WE GET DOWN AND DIRTY IN THIS
HANDS-ON ROMP THROUGH NEW VEGAS

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Kinect vs Move

Motion control hits Xbox
360 and PS3 PG. 54

Guitar Hero vs Rock Band 3

Check out our awesome
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MEET THE STAFF

**Wil O'Neal** Editor-in-Chief

Wil is worried that the time he's spent playing *Fallout: New Vegas* may ruin his love of the real-world Las Vegas. Nah. He'll always have a place in his heart for a city that's dedicated to sin.

**Andy Eddy** Executive Editor

Andy's not a big gambler, so he probably wouldn't really mind seeing the real Vegas go up in smoke. That said, he did trek there recently for a UFC fight, and saw his fair share of mutants.

**Jenny Esdalle** Art Director

If @GAMER were like this month's cover title, *Fallout: New Vegas*, Jenny would be that altruistic player who's nice in the beginning but, by the time deadlines roll around, is shooting people with impunity.

**Jillian Pierce** Designer

Jillian isn't just a designer; she's also a gamer who's obsessed with zombies. When we decided to feature *Fallout: New Vegas* on the cover she jumped at the chance to design the story.

Letter from the EDITOR

WELCOME TO

@GAMER

When we launched @GAMER last month people thought we were crazy. "Who," they said, "in their right mind would launch a gaming magazine in this climate?" Well, first and foremost, no one at @GAMER has ever claimed to be in our right minds. (We do sit around obsessing about the most entertaining ways to kill our enemies.) And based on the feedback that we received from a lot of you, you're more than stoked that we scoffed at the naysayers. With that in mind we're excited to be back with more previews, reviews and features and—of course—those all-too-valuable coupons that you all love so much.

We really had fun putting together this second issue. Executive Editor Andy Eddy flew to Washington to

spend several hours getting his hands dirty with *Halo: Reach* as well as Microsoft's Kinect device, while I went down to L.A. to get hands-on time with Sony's Move Controller for the PS3 before heading to Obsidian to spend the day playing *Fallout: New Vegas*. Of course we hope that you all enjoy our second issue. And be sure to keep the feedback coming.

And while you're at it, we'd love it if you would participate in this quick survey to tell us what you think of @GAMER:

<http://tiny.cc/FirstToKnow>.

William O'Neal
Editor In Chief

Staff_

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@GAMER



Just wanted to say congrats on the new magazine... Pretty cool of @BestBuy to do monthly mags.

—@DarkAngelRafael via Twitter

ED: We think so, too, but we're in a heavily biased position here.

Just got the first issue. Not bad. If you provide discounts like this in every magazine then count me in!

—@Spiderduff via Twitter

ED: The promise was for at least \$20 in coupons in each issue, but the first two issues have blown that out of the water. Best Buy and @GAMER will do our best to keep offering similarly great value to our readers.

Got the launch issue of @GAMER in the mail today for being a RewardZone Gamers Club member. Might subscribe soon. It's the EGM—kinda good.

—@mattdriscoll via Twitter

ED: Thanks for the kind words. It's flattering to be compared to one of the longest-running game magazines.

I was surprised when I went through Best Buy the other day to find a store magazine. At first I didn't know what it was, but after one of the employees explained it, I couldn't believe there was a new, full gaming magazine. I bought the first issue and I can't wait to get every one after. It's nice to see such a complete gaming magazine with product reviews and other useful information. Knowing that it is a store-sponsored magazine, I was

worried that the reviews in your magazine would also be biased, but so far that does not seem to be the case.

I really like the magazine's layout (and especially the awesome coupons!), not so much the color scheme though (or the @ symbols as stars), but that's just me. I especially enjoyed the "Reviews" section layout, with the plethora of pictures for each review, the sidebar with quick information, and the little blurb from another person in the mix. Very nice!

Also a more gaming-related question, any news about the final part in the Call of Duty: Modern Warfare trilogy? I know it's still a year and a half off but I remember hearing about some trouble between staff of Infinity Ward and Activision, do you guys know how that affected the game?

Thanks! And can't wait to see many future issues!

—Alex F. via e-mail

ED: We're happy you found @GAMER and appreciate both the positive comments and the critical ones. We expect that, with @GAMER being billed as "the official games magazine of Best Buy," we'll have some skeptics and naysayers assuming that everything in the magazine will be positive. But the staff is taking a critical look at everything with the hopes that readers like you will see the integrity and not just the affiliation.

That said, we know that any publication can continue

to improve, and that's what we strive for with @GAMER. We feel (as Alex and many of our other readers have confirmed) that the first issue was a good start, and we welcome the positive and negative comments so we can try to keep improving.

Finally, you asked about Activision's Modern Warfare series: At present, Activision hasn't announced another Call of Duty game in the works beyond Black Ops, which Treyarch is developing (for release this November), but the success of the Modern Warfare series makes a third one all but inevitable. One not-so-official clue for MW3 came via the legal documents that were filed as part of Activision's lawsuit against Infinity Ward's founders, Jason West and Vince Zampella. Activision fired the pair in March, and the court filings claimed that attempts by West and Zampella to leave Activision and start a new development studio caused delays in the development of MW3. Not long after their departure, the pair filed a countersuit against Activision seeking, among other things, control of the Modern Warfare franchise, and started a new studio called Respawn. It may take some time for this all to be sorted out, and hopefully it won't interfere with the development of MW3 (which we assume wasn't due before 2011 anyway).

CORRECTIONS:

While we'd rather avoid having to relive our mistakes, we want to make sure we set the record straight.

Our masthead neglected to list Mitch Dyer and Meghan Watt in the Contributors section even though they were on our "review crew" page.

Readers of the Fable III news story might have wondered, based on an image caption, if there was a new kingdom to command called "Elysium." Alas, the land of Albion is where you'll focus your kingly efforts.

Some may have been surprised to find Microsoft and Bungie listed as the publisher and developer, respectively, on the Naughty Bear review page. In fact, 505 Games should have been listed as the publisher and Artificial Mind and Movement (A2M) as the developer.

CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS

Treyarch takes aim at continuing the shooter series.



BEST BUY CUSTOMER REVIEWS & RATINGS

WANT TO HAVE YOUR SAY?

What are you playing now? Do you like it? Do you hate it? Let the other @GAMER readers know what you think—send in a short 50- to 100-word review to reviews@atgamer magazine.com, and we'll repost some of them here each issue.

Submit your review to:
reviews@atgamer magazine.com



Alan Wake was not a game I had intended to pick up. After five years in development, I hesitated to believe that this title could become something great. The gameplay is designed to suck you into the world and steer you toward your answers. I really enjoyed unraveling the mystery of Bright Falls.

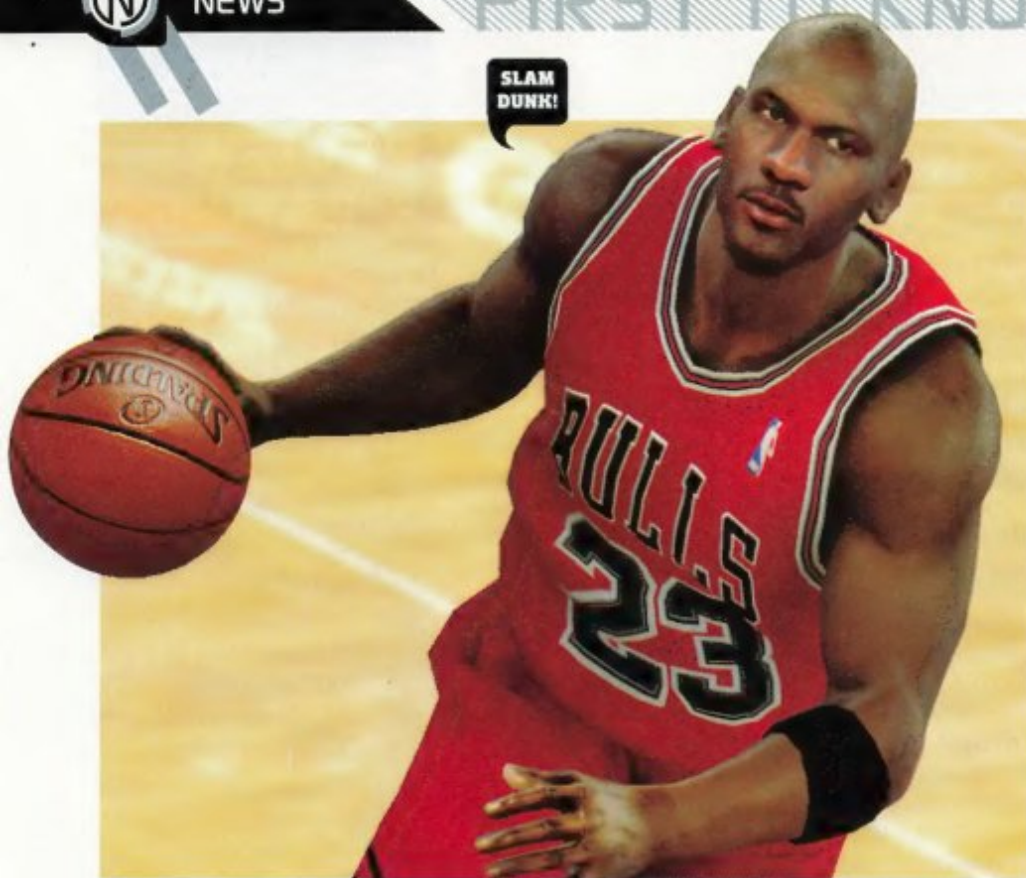
—Russ Stewart



▲ OOPSIE!

Sorry about the mistakes in our premiere issue. We promise to be perfect from here on out.

SLAM DUNK!



JORDAN COMES TO NBA 2K11

2K Sports announces a new mode: The Jordan Challenge

Every sport has its best player ever. When it comes to football, golf, and soccer, there may not be a real consensus. (@GAMER would say Joe Montana, Tiger Woods, and Pele, respectively.) Of course, while just saying this is liable to incite a flame war of epic proportions, everyone is in agreement that Michael Jordan is the best basketball player ever. Which is why 2K Sports announcing a new game mode for NBA 2K11 is so exciting.

The new mode, called the Jordan Challenge, gives you the chance to participate in Michael Jordan's 10 most famous games. Remember in March 1990, when Jordan torched the Cleveland Cavaliers for 69 points in what Jordan himself calls his greatest comeback? In the Jordan Challenge you can play that very game. Another notable scenario is the so-called "Flu Game," when the Bulls defeated the Utah Jazz in Game

YOU CAN EXPECT TO SIMILARLY DASH THE HOPES OF THE NEW YORK KNICKS...

Six of the 1997 finals. Of course, you can expect to dash the hopes of the New York Knicks, the Boston Celtics, and the Portland Trailblazers in a similar fashion.

Given the opportunity to play as the Chicago Bulls from throughout the late '80s and '90s, there's not yet word as to whether or not you can rain down three-point shots from six feet behind the arc as Steve Kerr... or customize Dennis Rodman's hair. ©

GREEN LANTERN IS COMING TO A CONSOLE NEAR YOU

Warner Bros. and DC Entertainment release details about next year's movie game

GREEN LANTERN IS SET TO BLOW UP box offices when it's released to theaters next July. With that in mind, Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment and DC Entertainment recently announced that *Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters* is currently being developed for the PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, and Nintendo DS.

The game is currently being developed by Double Helix Games for the PS3, Xbox 360, and Wii, while the Nintendo DS version is being developed by Griptonite Games. *Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters* is being

described as an action/adventure game where you'll have more than a dozen constructs at your disposal as you use the Green Lantern power ring to bring order and peace to the universe. While the movie stars Ryan Reynolds as Hal Jordan, the latest member of the Green Lantern Corps, no details have been released about the cast of the videogame.

The first videogame to revolve around the Green Lantern universe, *Rise of the Manhunters* aims to give you interactivity that will add to the movie-game experience. ©



▲ Here's hoping the game lives up to the expectations of Green Lantern fans.

SIX FLAGS

RIDES THE FACEBOOK GAMING COASTER

@GAMER spent a day at Six Flags riding rides and playing *Mascot Park*, Six Flags' foray into social gaming

When the folks at Six Flags contacted @GAMER about spending the day at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom riding rollercoasters, drinking beer, and...oh, yeah, checking out their new Facebook game, how could we say no?

With the runaway success of so-called "free-to-play" titles such as *Mafia Wars* and *Farmville* on Facebook, Six Flags knew it was time to ride the social gaming rails, too. Also available on Facebook, *Mascot Park* offers casual players 13 and over "social interaction, creativity, and zany antics" in an easy-to-adopt way. Co-developed by noise and Making Fun, the game is simple to get into: You enter the world as a customizable mascot whose sole purpose is stardom. You

accomplish this by completing objectives, such as putting on shows for your friends, which earns you coins that you can then use to upgrade your characters and shows. But you can also sabotage your friends' shows.

Mascot Park boasts several minigames, such as *Mascot Melee*, where you basically beat up on your friends, and *Cannonball Chaos*, where you use jetpacks and other assorted gadgets to jump and fly around theme parks. You'll earn coins based on how rad you are.

While *Mascot Park* is essentially free to play, you can purchase upgrades with real-world money. If playing a virtual mascot sounds fun to you, mosey on over to facebook.com/mascotpark to get in on the ongoing beta test. ☺

"*Mascot Park* offers casual players 'social interaction, creativity, and zany antics.'"



▲ Years of Six Flags R&D = Bunny Guns?



▲ Customize your, um, adorable personal mascot.



EIC Wil taught the law a puddy tail

Trade-ins

SELL
IT!

BEST BUY GETS INTO THE TRADE-IN GAME

The unique program opens the store to buyers



Best Buy is ready to roll out a new program for buying and selling used games at its retail stores in the United States. When this program begins Best Buy customers will be able to bring in their used games and trade them in for Best Buy gift cards that can be used on anything in the store, including games, gaming accessories, and consumer-electronics equipment. Additionally, any used games that are purchased will be backed by Best Buy's return policies.

While much has been made lately about the \$2 billion used-games market—as well as who stands to gain and who stands to lose—the fact remains that, at present, used games are here to stay. That said, many publishers are putting in policies to ensure that they also reap financial benefit from used-game sales. EA Sports Online Pass (which was mentioned in the July/August issue of @GAMER) requires purchasers of used EA Sports titles to pay \$10 in order to take their games online. Other publishers are likewise implementing features to ensure that they, too, get a piece of the used-games pie.

While Best Buy currently has a similar program at BestBuy.com, gamers who wish to trade in their games in-store can visit BestBuy.com/gametradein first to find out the trade-in value of their games and which locations can take your trade-ins in store before coming. Once there, they can visit Customer Service or, in some locations, a dedicated trade-in desk in the gaming department. ☺

WIL AND ANDY

REVISITING E3

Two gaming-industry veterans went to E3 and all they got was a boatload of hotchkes

If there's one thing that can be said about the @GAMER editorial team, it's that we're old. What comes with our age, though, is experience... lots of it. So it was with great excitement that Wil O'Neal and Andy Eddy descended upon the Los Angeles Convention Center in mid-June to raise the number of E3s attended between the two of them to a whopping 27! And E3 2010 was one of the best videogame trade shows we've ever attended.

Things got going Sunday night with Microsoft putting on an interesting Cirque du Soleil event. The reaction to this show was mixed: Everyone was hyped to check out Kinect (previously called "Project Natal"; see page 54), but it wasn't a hands-on event—in fact, Kinect wasn't shown in actual use—and many of the attendees had to stand for about two hours, a portion of it as part of the "performance." The following day, Microsoft made the official Kinect announcement during its press briefing at the Wiltern Theater, and gave live demonstrations

of some upcoming games. It also announced a content deal with sports cable channel ESPN and debuted the Xbox 360 "Slim" (see page 12) to an enthusiastic crowd.

Nintendo had its press briefing early Tuesday at the Nokia Theater, right near the convention center. As its main draw, it said it wanted attendees to get a chance to try out the forthcoming Nintendo 3DS, its no-glasses-3D handheld, and paraded out dozens of models a la Deal or No Deal, each of which had one of the tiny devices tethered to her waist. Each attendee was able to get a few minutes to see how well it worked.

"THINGS GOT GOING SUNDAY WITH MICROSOFT PUTTING ON A CIRQUE DU SOLEIL EVENT."

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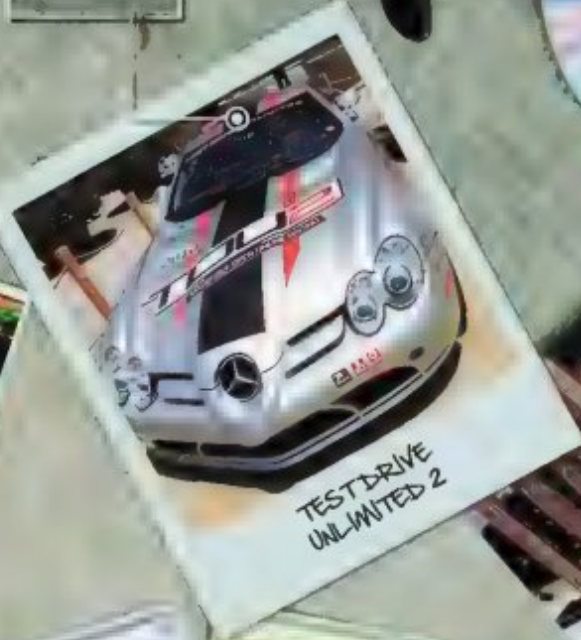
Nintendo E3 Presentation
Andy Eddy
Exec. Editor/@Gamer magazine



Two...
Two...
Two...
Two...
Two...

TRION

LOCAL NEWS 2
The Capcom North
had been taken
over by the company
on the day of the
release.



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THAT'S MISTER
ICE T. WE THINK



GET PHYSICAL WITH
XBOX KINECT

MAFIA II

**BIDDY
LANGUAGE**
Flapping arms
and contorted
bodies were
everywhere at
this year's E3.

PlayStation



XBOX 360

SLIMS DOWN

Microsoft's vaunted console gets a major-league makeover, and we couldn't be happier about it

At this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, Microsoft made a huge splash by finally unveiling both its Kinect motion-control device (see page 54) and the all-new Xbox 360.

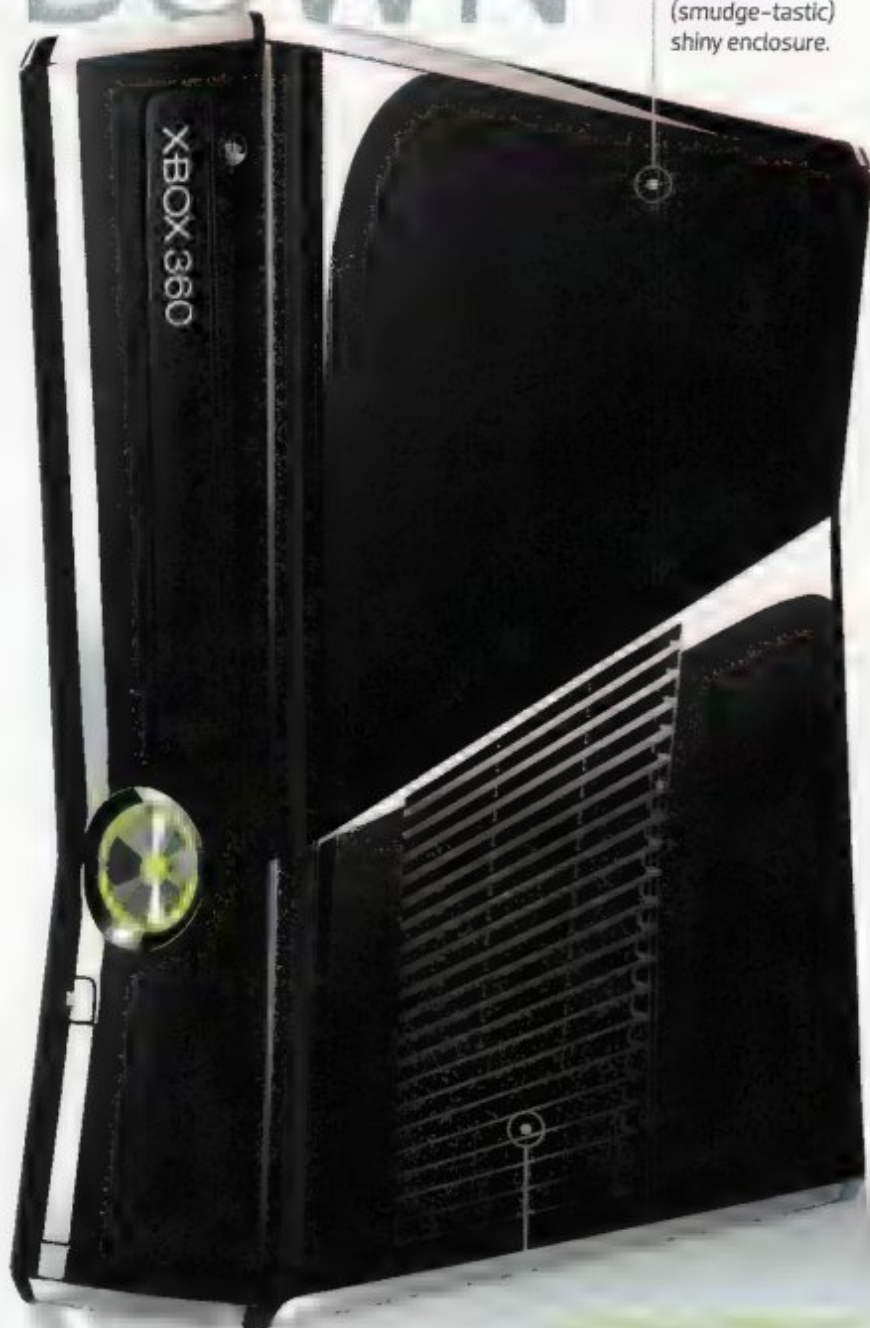
This new system comes in two configurations: the \$300 model rocks a massive 250GB hard drive, while the \$200 version has 4GB of flash memory (if you want, you can add a hard drive later). We're also pleased that both feature 802.11n Wi-Fi built-in.

In addition to promises from Microsoft that the new Xbox 360 will be more stable than its predecessor, its box also boasts about it being "Kinect ready"; the Kinect device has a proprietary connector that the new Xbox 360 supports out of the box. Owners of the original Xbox 360 will have to run a dedicated power cord to Kinect.

Any way you look at it, the new Xbox 360 is sweet. Smaller, sleeker, more stable and much quieter, Xbox gamers have a new toy to lust after. ©

SO SHINY!

In addition to being smaller than its older brother, the new Xbox 360 has a nice (smudge-tastic) shiny enclosure.



What's in the box?

The new Xbox 360 is a welcome update, and it comes with all of the necessary basics—such as a single Xbox 360 wireless controller and composite AV cable—but also includes an Xbox 360 Headset and, thank the maker, built-in Wi-Fi.



These vents and the console's extremely quiet fan should help avoid the "red ring of death" that plagued older Xbox 360s.



PROFILE

This sleeker Xbox 360 will make a great addition to any home theater. But be careful not to move the console while it's on. Videos posted on YouTube show gamers severely damaging their discs.

LET'S GET IT LETS GO

Like its older brother, the new Xbox 360 boasts multiple USB ports for additional controllers.

NO MORE FULL WIRELESS

With built-in support for 802.11n wireless, setting up the Xbox 360 and going online will be a breeze.

NO MORE RED RINGS

The Xbox 360 doesn't have red rings! If the console starts to overheat, you'll get an on-screen message alerting you about it.



NEW PORTS:

The Xbox 360 features a new set of ports, including a new USB port for the Kinect sensor. The console also features a new set of ports for the Kinect sensor, including a new USB port for the Kinect sensor. The console also features a new set of ports for the Kinect sensor, including a new USB port for the Kinect sensor.

will appear if the console overheats

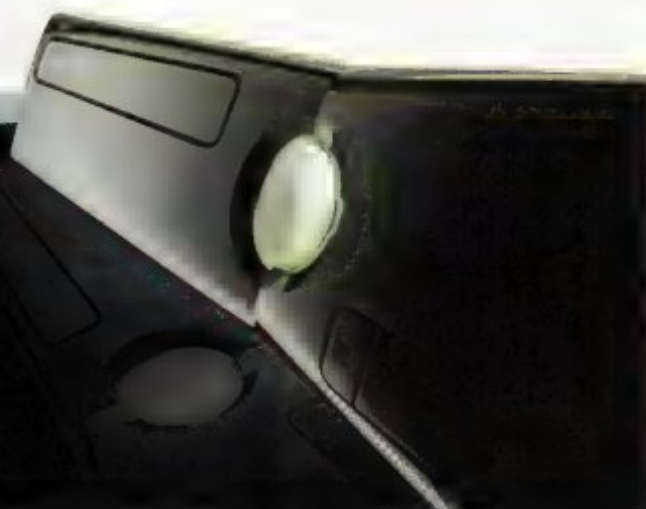
NO FACEPLATE

Though a relatively minor point, one thing you won't see with the updated Xbox 360 is a decorative faceplate. One of the original Xbox 360's unique features was a changeable faceplate, and many different designs were offered in stores and online. The new console eliminates the removable faceplate, so if you want your Xbox 360 to stand out like none other, you'll need to do the artwork yourself (or contract it to a pro).

WHAT YOU DON'T SEE:

Obviously, you won't need an off-board wireless adapter, because, as previously noted, the new Xbox 360 has all that built in. Not having to purchase a separate adapter will save you a few bucks.

One other thing you won't see is an obvious hard drive mounted on the side, as there was on the original Xbox 360. On the new console, it's located on the side behind a removable plastic door, and it's much smaller, which is one of the reasons the console is smaller. If you already own an Xbox 360 and are going to shift over to the new model, you'll need to invest in a Data Transfer Cable for Xbox 360 (available for \$19.99) to move your data over.



▼ The Big Apple took a bite out of Halo 3 at Best Buy.

EVENTS

YOU NEED TO BE AT!

There ain't no party like a Best Buy party

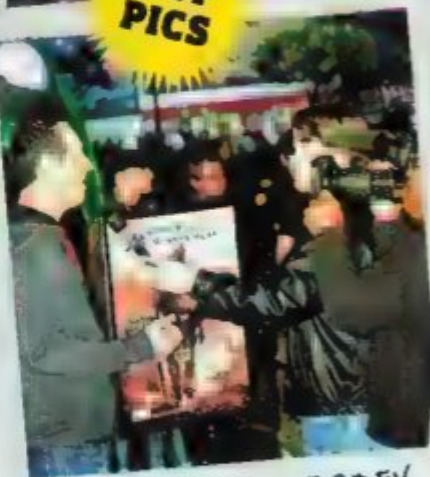
Videogame launches are drawing the glitz, glamour and attention of red-carpet movie premieres, often attracting stars from TV and film, music, and sports to the events. Past events have had celebs and gamers alike clamoring to get their hands on games like *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* and *DJ Hero*. In 2007, Best Buy held a *Halo 3* event at its 5th Avenue store in New York City (above) and now they're doing it again. If you preordered *Halo: Reach* from Best Buy, you may have already won one of 10 trips for two to NYC for the launch party this September.

Be sure not to miss the upcoming *Halo: Reach* midnight opening at 12:01 a.m. on September 14. Check here for store details: www.bestbuy.com/gaming-events. Of course, if you make it out, send your best pictures to editor@atgamer.com and one may be featured in a future issue of @GAMER! (M)



THE FIRST COPY OF DJ HERO SOLD IN HOLLYWOOD

TOP
PICS



MODERN WARFARE 2 DEV BEING INTERVIEWED

BEEN TO A MIDNIGHT
LAUNCH? SEND US
YOUR PICS!

Fallout

NEW VEGAS

new game
GAMERS
CLUB
Pre-order and
receive 500
bonus points

Pre-order Today
and receive

Digital MERCENARY PACK

Available only at Best Buy 10/19/10



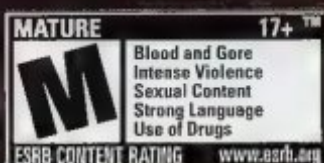
The Mercenary Pack includes
Lightweight Metal Armor, a
Mercenary's Grenade Rifle, Three Super
Stimpaks and Three Doctors Bags.

Four Unique Fallout COASTERS



www.falloutnewvegas.com

**BEST
BUY**



Games for Windows

XBOX 360

XBOX LIVE

PS3

PS3

OBSIDIAN

Bethesda
SOFTWARE
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TOP 5

HERE ARE THE TOP FIVE GAMES THAT ARE OCCUPYING MY TIME THIS MONTH:

05.
Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies (DS)

A true RPG with strong single-player and multiplayer modes. It's a must-buy for any role-playing fan.

04.
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker (PSP)

Set in 1974 Central America. You play as Naked Snake four years after the events of Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops. MGS games are known for their enthralling stories and stealth gameplay. You also get Outer Ops, Extra Ops, and Versus Ops.

03.
LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4 (Wii, Xbox 360, PS3, PC, PSP, DS)
Like LEGO Star Wars and LEGO Indiana Jones, LEGO Harry Potter is a reimagined LEGO version of the scenes from the first four movies. A must-have!

02.
Crackdown 2 (Xbox 360)
You're an Agent who must protect Pacific City against the Cell, but the real fun comes in multi-player modes like Rocket Tag and Team Deathmatch. There's also a co-op mode.

01.
Transformers: War for Cybertron (Xbox 360, PS3)

This game is so much more than meets the eyes. Get it? Its in-depth story takes place millions of years before the TV show. In single-player you can be either an Autobot or a Decepticon, and the game's replayability comes from its co-op and multiplayer modes.

@GAMER's resident girl about town dishes about this month's time wasted, hanging with beautiful people, and finishing old games.



Halo: Reach

E3 the Electronic Entertainment Expo, is one of the biggest gaming events of the year, so it's understood that big-budget parties come with the territory. This year was no different. New and upcoming games were celebrated with ice sculptures, cosplayers, and open bars. One party I got to attend was for the upcoming Xbox exclusive Halo: Reach. I got to interview some of the voice actors from the game, get some hands-on time with Halo: Reach, and, most importantly, a fairy gave me bottles of free orange- and melon-flavored absinthe. I'm not joking. I'm hoping that fairy makes a reappearance in the game, maybe as DLC? Aside from the drinks, the party also had plenty of stations set up so you could play the game and, let me tell you, jetpacks are just as cool as you thought they would be. Get ready for Halo: Reach on September 14th.

This Month I saw



◀ Halo: Reach (L)
NikoleZ is ready to get all paparazzi on folks.

◀ Cortana? Master Chief? (R)
NikoleZ chats with the voice talent.

Tips: Break out those old, unfinished games

Summer break means sunshine, sleeping, and plenty of free time. Summer also means fewer videogames are being released. The summer release lists pale in comparison to the amount of games we'll see during the holidays. So as a smart gamer what do you do when you're ready for a new game?

But there aren't many out? Well, I usually do is go back and finish a game I never beat, or replay a game I loved when I was younger. My recent oldie-but-goodies were Dragon Age, which I never fully finished, and Paper Mario for the N64, which I loved when I was younger.

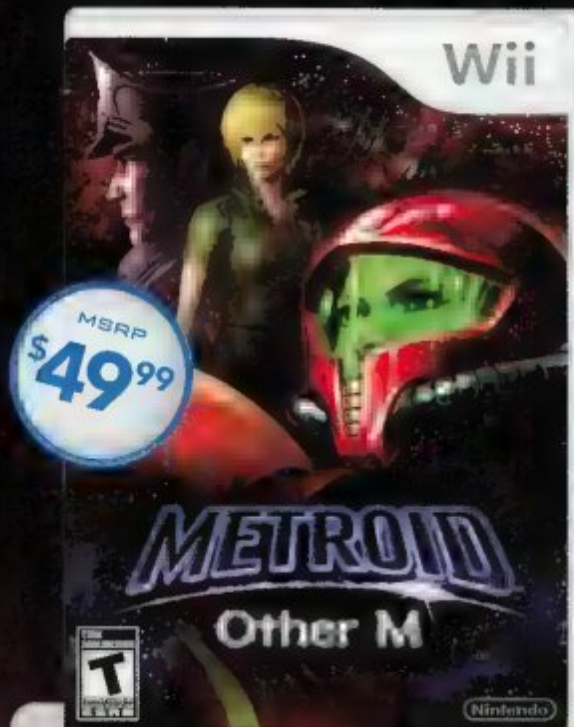
Got old games?



• Dragon Age is a classic that still holds up.



• Paper Mario for the N64 is still as fun as ever.



Best Buy Exclusive Ringtones!

rewardzone

3 FREE *Metroid: Other M* Ringtones.
Offer only valid for Reward Zone Gamers Club
members with preorder and purchase.***

For more details visit myrewardzone.bestbuy.com/gamersclub.

OFFER VALID 8/11/10-8/31/10
WHILE SUPPLIES LAST.

METROID

Other M

DISCOVER THE INSIDE STORY OF
SAMUS ARAN, THE INTERSTELLAR
BOUNTY HUNTER

- Action-packed and cinematic Wii game
- Learn about Samus™ inside the suit with a rich storyline that picks up right after the *Super Metroid*™ game
- Seamless transition between first- and third-person gameplay
- Exciting collaboration blending original *Metroid* creator's expert level design and exploratory focus with Team Ninja's signature stylish, no-holds-barred action.

AVAILABLE: 8/31/10

Play *Metroid: Other M* on
your new Wii™ console! Now with
***Wii Sports* AND *Wii Sports Resort*!**
Introducing New Black**



Wii Remote™ & Nunchuk™ Controller

+



Wii MotionPlus™

+



Wii Sports™



Wii Sports Resort™

*Based on MSRP of *Wii Sports Resort*. **Bundle also available in white. ***Free ringtones are delivered to a mobile device via text message. Messaging and data rates may apply. Not supported by all carriers or mobile devices. Deposit may be required for preorder. See retailer for details.
Free ringtones must be claimed by November 2, 2010.

Metroid™, *Other M* and *Wii* system sold separately. Game trademarks and copyrights are properties of their respective owners.
Nintendo properties are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2010 Nintendo. 72231A



Nintendo



Featured Game:

DOGGONE FUN!

The *Last Resort* transports all the fun and adventure from PC and consoles to the iPad.

WALLACE & GROMIT
IN THE LAST
RESORT FOR IPAD

\$4.99

Telltale, telltalegames.com

With stellar voice acting, gorgeous production values, and everybody's favorite claymation man-and-dog team, *The Last Resort* is a fun and family-friendly adventure. The 4-chapter story follows our heroes on their quest to create a seaside resort in the comfort of their own basement. You'll collect items to solve puzzles (just tap two fingers on the screen to highlight all the objects you can interact with), talk to other characters, and ultimately solve a funny whodunnit mystery with Wallace's Deduct-o-Matic invention. Developer Telltale is known for its point-and-click adventures, and *The Last Resort* features the clever dialogue, polished look, and charming story that make these characters so endearing. And the iPad's touch controls are an immersive way to experience the fun. And if it's too tough for, ahem, younger players? Just ratchet up the hint level in the settings.



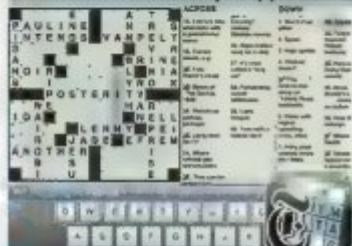
Wallace and Gromit look as great as ever on the iPad.

Paid Games:

Don't break the bank. These iPad games aren't all free, but they're worth the money.

"ITS HAND-DRAWN GRAPHICS LOOK CUTE, BUT JELLY CAR 2 IS HARDCORE."

The interface is smart. Hopefully you are too.



NYTIMES CROSSWORDS

Free, plus subscription
Magmic, magmic.com/iphone/nytcrosswords

Hey, crossword junkies: You don't have to buy The New York Times just for the puzzle anymore. This well-designed app gives you a week's worth of daily puzzles for free, plus some classic ones from the archive. Subscriptions to the new daily puzzles range from \$1.99/month to \$16.99/year, and the stats, rankings, and online leaderboards add to the fun. Your subscription can even sync between multiple iPads and iPhones.

Glowing-dot armies are fiercer than they look.



STRATEGY

\$1.99
Affogato, strategygame.com

This turn-based strategy game has you fighting to control all the countries on a map—basically, it's Risk. But the simple concept and hexagonal graphics belie surprising depth. You can play against four opponents, either computer-controlled or friends passing one device around. And online mode lets you challenge your friends to turn-based matches. Four map sizes, four difficulties, and customizable rules will keep you hooked, and the app works on your iPad or iPhone.

Drop the vocabulary hammer on your friends.



WORDS WITH FRIENDS HD

\$2.99
Newtoy, newtoyinc.com/wp/

Turn-based Scrabble works well on the iPad, with the chat windows and game list popping up over the board. Play against friends online, pass-and-play with a friend in the room, or get matched up with a random opponent. The word list is a little weird—with friends scoring 100-plus points with some rather obscure words. But get a dozen or more games going at once and you'll be hooked in no time.

Everything jiggles, since it's made out of jelly.

Run, little pixel man, run!



JELLY CAR 2 ON IPAD

\$2.99

Disney Interactive, disney.com

Its hand-drawn graphics look cute, but Jelly Car 2 is pretty hardcore. Customize your car, pilot it through puzzles in Classic mode, and launch it crazy distances in Long Jump mode. Then grab a friend for the two-player co-op of Tether mode, or head-to-head of Race mode, both using the same iPad. Bored yet? Sort some puzzle pieces in Factory mode, or fire up the Level Editor and roll your own.

CANABALT

\$2.99

Semi Secret Software, canabalt.com

This poor man's Mirror's Edge (which is \$9.99 for the iPad) provides frantic twitch-play in a universal app containing native versions for both iPad and iPhone. It loads quickly, has excellent music, and only takes one finger to play. The graphics are blocky, but that's the intended style, and the parkour gameplay creates a real sense of speed and danger. Classic "one more round" addictiveness makes this an exciting package.



STAIR DISMOUNT UNIVERSAL

\$0.99

Secret Exit, secretextit.com

Indulge your evil side with this physics-based, uh... assault simulator? Choose from a selection of 3D staircases, stand a little crash-test dummy on top, decide where you want to push him from, and give him a shove. He tumbles down in ragdoll style, and you're scored by how far he falls and how much he's injured. Fun, right? And to add insult to injury you can import a Facebook friend's profile photo and slap it on the dummy. Ouch, that's gotta hurt.

HALOGEN

\$4.99

RocketHands, rockethands.com/halogen

Part air hockey, part Breakout, action game *Halogen* drops you into a neon world where you smash a glowing puck into enemies while avoiding annihilation. A 16-level single-player mode joins infinite mode and two-player head-to-head on the same iPad. The longer you play, the crazier things get, with power-ups, chain reactions, and menacing bosses. A bumpin' soundtrack, achievements, and leaderboards round out the fun.

Want more? For FREE!

FREE GAMES

10 FREE GAMES

LORD KNOWS YOU ALREADY SPENT A NICE CHUNK OF CHANGE ON YOUR IPAD. SO GIVE YOUR WALLET A BREAK FOR A MINUTE—THESE 10 GAMES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE APP STORE FOR OUR FAVE PRICE



01 RHYTHM RACER 2 HD iphone.avatartaboo.com

Pilot your spaceship along a track in time with a blaring song. Don't miss the orbs or jumps, or the music will fade. Four songs come free, and additional two-song packs are 99 cents.



02 SUDOKU TABLET guschide/sudokutablet

Four sudoku types with five difficulty levels will keep you scratching your chin, and the blank board lets you solve puzzles from the newspaper. A \$2.99 upgrade buys you unlimited puzzles.



03 TETARI tetari.com

The icon looks like Tetris, but this is different—use the pieces to fill in gaps anywhere on the board, but make sure you leave a space for the next piece on deck. It's addictive and fun.



04 HANGMAN CLASSIC HD FREE virtuesoft.com

Varied word lists like Food & Drink, Boy Names, Body Parts, and more add spice to this basic hangman game. The 99-cent paid version has more word lists and zero ads, but the free app's ads aren't intrusive.



05 BEER PONG HD FREE corvleed.com/beerpong

The dingy-basement graphics and physics-based gameplay are almost as fun as the concept. But the free game's large ads add to the low-rent atmosphere unless you upgrade to the 99-cent version.



06 CHICKTIONARY blackdot.com

Watch out for this adorable word-making game. The graphics, sound effects, and gameplay will get you hooked, and you only get 12 free puzzles. Additional packs of 100 puzzles are 99 cents each.



07 ISAAC NEWTON'S GRAVITY HD mimicgames.com

The tricky, physics-based puzzles and robust level editor inspire creativity, and the graphics are lovely. But you only get five puzzles for free, after which the upgrade to 100 puzzles costs \$9.99.



08 WAR CHESS indagames.com

This attractive 3D chess game lets you play against the computer or another person on the same iPad. You can play with normal pieces or little statues that attack each other in animated battle sequences.



09 700 SOLITAIRE GAMES FREE FOR IPAD pdart.com

The name's a little misleading, because the free app includes 12 solitaire variations, not 700. (The full app is \$4.99, ad-free.) But what's there has nice backgrounds, undo/redo, and hints.



10 THE KARATE KID sonypictures.com

Flick, swipe, and tap through five minigames based on the exercises used by Jackie Chan to train Jaden Smith in the recent movie remake. It's a little on the sparse side for adults, but kids who dug the movie will love it.

SEPTEMBER 2010

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LABOR DAY
For workin' so hard!

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Ultima released in 1980

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In 1983, Atari dumps six million unsold copies of E.T. for the Atari 2600 in a landfill in New Mexico

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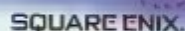
EVENTS

BEST
BUY

MIDNIGHT OPENINGS:
HALO: REACH On-Sale Date: Sept 14

Check: www.bestbuy.com/gamingevents

HALO REACH SWEEPSTAKES:
Preorder Halo Reach at Best Buy and you're automatically entered in Best Buy's Halo: Reach Sweepstakes. Grand Prize is 10 trips for two to NYC to attend Best Buy's Halo launch party. Second prize are Halo Edition Xbox 360s.



KANE & LYNCH DOG DAYS

KANEANDLYNCH.COM





The biggest Halo game ever is almost here • Words: Andy Eddy

A recent visit to Bungie Studios near Seattle gave us a final look at a nearly finished *Halo: Reach*. Our hands-on with the game proved that it would be as entertaining as any previous *Halo* and also showed off the full scope of what Bungie is calling "the definitive Halo game—and the last from Bungie Studios."

We started about a third of the way into the single-player campaign. Playing on Heroic (the second-toughest difficulty) offered a lot of challenge, with pockets of adversaries keeping us busy. *Reach* offers plenty of places to take cover or to set up a flanking maneuver, but the higher your difficulty setting, the better your foes are at figuring out where you are. The AI-driven characters are tough and move more realistically than before (see the sidebar on AI for more background).

Pretty much everything you do results in earning credits for your character's account, which you'll use to upgrade your character. Some of the upgrades will alter or improve your visor, armor, and even your character's voice. Then there are the special effects, such as "Grunt Birthday Party," which sprays confetti

when you're killed. Joseph Tung, executive producer for *Halo: Reach* at Bungie, told us that it may take months to earn enough for some of the high-profile rewards.

The first two levels we played in the campaign showed us more of the familiar on-foot

THE AI WILL SCALE BASED ON HOW MANY PLAYERS ARE IN A CO-OP SESSION.

and in-vehicle combat we've come to know from other *Halo* games. A mission to take out AA (anti-aircraft) guns—gigantic, daunting structures that were amply guarded—demonstrated an extended battle with multiple checkpoints that'll keep you on the move around

a central location to complete a single objective. The third piece of the campaign we played also gave us some time in a Sabre orbital fighter, demonstrating air-to-air combat in a large 3D space, which made *Reach* feel pretty fresh.

We also spent half a day sampling a bunch of the different multiplayer modes, many of which will be familiar to *Halo* veterans, but which also feature further improvements to match-making and party organization that will make getting into matches as a group much easier. It was also easy to see proof of what Bungie said was an across-the-board increase in polygon counts for character models and objects. (Die-hard *Halo* fans will spend some time zooming in on guns and armor suits in Forge.) We only discussed the game-modifying Skulls and the Challenge system—which'll add another layer to the objectives you'll need to complete and the credits you'll earn—so it'll be exciting to dig into those and more when we get our hands on the final game. Be sure to pick up *@GAMER's* October issue, in which we'll review *Halo: Reach's* full single-player campaign and assess how its various multiplayer components hold up. ☺



▼ If you live under a rock, you missed out on the fact that you'll have access to jetpacks. Bravo, Bungie!

FORGE A FRIENDSHIP

Forge mode, which lets you mess with the levels provided on the game disc and create your own, has been upgraded for *Halo: Reach*. Now called Forge World, it offers improved ways to place items and have them interact with (or lock to) each other, so they look like natural parts of the terrain. The most important aspect of Forge World is how massively big it is, with plenty of giant structures and other objects that can be placed.



REACH... FOR YOUR DESTINY



FIGHT WITH MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES

You'll find many of the same multiplayer modes from previous *Halo* games, but now played on gigantic maps, which makes offensive attacks or defensive stands something teammates will want to coordinate. One level featured a giant spire, and when the battle moved to the top there wasn't much room to maneuver. Managing to push someone off the edge was so enjoyable!

Oh, and if you're interested in collaborating with your friends to create the next great *Halo* multiplayer map, you'll be happy to know that Forge World supports up to eight players working on a map via Xbox Live or System Link, or up to four players in splitscreen.

XBOX 360

GAME DETAILS



HALO REACH

INFO

Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Bungie
Platforms: Xbox 360

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

4-player co-op (or 2-player split screen); 16-player competitive multiplayer or via System Link (or 4-player via splitscreen)

GENRE

First-person shooter

RELEASE DATE

September 14, 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Halo fans (duh), shooter enthusiasts and budding map designers should have their hands full for months



YOU CAN'T SPELL "AIIIIII-AGGHH!!!" WITHOUT "AI"

I asked Joseph Tung about the game's improved AI, and he said, "As far as the AI gameplay, we knew we wanted to bring the Elites back as your primary enemy—and you can't bring the Elites back and not make a major investment in the AI to make them... the smartest, fastest, most agile—truly the equals to the Spartans on the Covenant side."

Also, for the first time in a *Halo* game, the AI will scale based on how many players are in a co-op session. Not only will you see stronger opposition from non-player characters as you increase the difficulty level, but it'll also get tougher when you go from two players in a co-op session to three or four.



“THE DEFINITIVE HALO GAME—AND THE LAST FROM BUNGIE STUDIOS.”



▼ Look at all of this: The detail on the gun and armor is one thing, but smoke and special effects, too?!

▼ COOL WEAPONS

Ignoring all the other coolness, he's holding a "Needle Rifle." You want one, don't you?



▼ UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

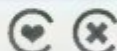
A knife kill, face-to-face, is so great. Better if you pile on an assassination as well.



WIL SAYS:



Forge World is a massive improvement over the previous Forge. With numerous enhancements to the interface, you won't have to be an experienced level designer to make a working map.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ The game is visually gorgeous and crisply detailed
- ♥ Forge World is immense and oh-so-versatile, making it easy to build your own maps

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Call this predictive pessimism, but the thought that this is Bungie's last Halo gives me concern for what future Halo games will be about and how they'll play



▼ DON'T LET THE PRODUCER DIE...

While Tung was coy about discussing "Easter eggs" for the game, he did talk about one that he did talk about is that you'll have AI teammates often join you as part of your team in the single-player campaign. It turns out these "soldiers" have names that are randomly selected from a list of actual Bungie employees. When I pressed Tung to name more Easter eggs, he would say was "Find the Eggs." If you find any cool Easter eggs, tell us about it on the @GAMER page on Facebook.



*In the time you spent
reading this sentence
you could have:*

ANNIHILATED A HUNDRED ALIENS

Blown up a bunch of noobs

Crushed some bugs

PAWNED A RED DRAGON

Engulfed your enemy in fire

Fragged your foes—and friends!

Gotten to the next level

Heaved a hand grenade into enemy headquarters

Iced another impossible score

JACKED A JAGUAR

Killed a lizard king

LOL with your friends in chat

Mucked your winning poker hand

Neutralized a Nazi

OBLITERATED YOUR OPPONENT'S ORCS

Pinged your game-playing peeps



PS3 XBOX 360 WII



FIFA 11

INFO

Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

11 vs. 11 online play

GENRE

Sports

RELEASE DATE

September 28, 2010 for Xbox 360 and PS3; October 4, 2010 for the Wii

SUITABLE FOR

FIFA 11 is great for fans of the beautiful game and sports gamers as a whole

GAME DETAILS

HANDS ON

During a tough economy when the game industry is trying to reach new audiences, EA chose to make FIFA 11 tougher to play. Adding intricacy may add realism, but also alienate some new players.

ANDY SAYS

WHAT'S GREAT:

- With 22 human players competing in one game, FIFA 11 is more like real soccer than ever before
- Save replays to HDD

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- Passing in FIFA 11 is significantly harder than in previous years
- Many soccer fans may be "soccer-saturated"

FIFA 11

The beautiful game gets its annual makeover

Words: William O'Neal

With the World Cup behind us and Spain reigning supreme, we can get back to the business of regular soccer. FIFA soccer, the game series, has a rabid fan base. With that in mind, the folks at EA Sports listened to the fans and addressed many of their concerns.

Personality+ is a new feature that hopes to add ever more realism to the game. While it does involve the way individual players look, it also affects gameplay: Different players' dribbling styles will impact how you play with them. Ronaldo's tiny (but rapid) steps make it easier to shoot and pass on a dime, while Drogba's longer strides let him speed around but make ball control trickier.

The passing system in FIFA 11 has been fiercely tweaked. Whereas before the AI just knew where a pass was going to land, the AI now reads the ball's trajectory. Additionally, using "contextual errors" makes passes less accurate and more realistic. In a nutshell, there are many more factors that play into whether or not a pass will succeed.

A definite improvement on last year's entry, FIFA 11 should please soccer purists when it's finally released. Just be warned, though: Based on the preview build that we've been testing this game is also much harder.



GAMEPLAY



GOODBYE TO PING-PONG PASSING

The days of simply hitting the pass button repeatedly until the ball moves down the pitch are done. In FIFA 11 players will actually have to target who they're passing to and work to get the ball to the right player.

'ELLO 'ELLO



Personality+
In FIFA 11, players' attributes affect how they look as well as how they play.



NOW THAT'S MULTIPLAYER

Soccer is an 11-on-11 game—and now so is FIFA 11. You can team up with your buddies to take on teams, and one player even gets to be a goalie, who can benefit from the new Be a Goalie camera that's "behind" the keeper.

Unleash Your Inner Speed Demon

Get in the game faster with Intel® Solid-State Drives



Experience
fast game loads
and more
fluid game play

Ubisoft® an Intel® Solid-State Drive:

"For an exceptional
Assassin's Creed 2 experience,
Ubisoft recommends
Intel® Solid-State Drives."

-May 2010





In *SOCOM 4* you'll command two teams of two soldiers.

SOCOM 4

Visit an unspecified Southeast Asian country and shoot people

• Words: William D'Neal

SOCOM is one of those franchises that has such a rabid fan base that making sequels is often a double-edged sword. On one hand, because of the franchise's popularity, a sequel is oftentimes a must. That said, those very same fans will often bristle at changes, whether subtle or overt. Enter *SOCOM 4*. The latest in the popular online shooter series that started in 2002 on the PS2, *SOCOM 4* is set to take full advantage of much of what the PS3 has to offer. Can you say "Move"?

But first, the game. It won't take you long to notice that *SOCOM 4* is decidedly less realistic than its predecessors—it plays less like the tactical simulations of yore and more like an action movie. What this means in-game is that you can take a lot more damage than before and still manage to heal. This greatly affects the way that you'll play *SOCOM 4*. In previous years you were encouraged to be more stealthy, which greatly impacted the flow of the game. Indeed, *SOCOM* has traditionally been a slow-playing game that necessitates extreme caution prior to engaging the enemy. Now, with the game a little

more fast and loose, would-be spec-ops gamers are more likely to be cavalier in their approach to engaging the enemy, so don't be surprised when they charge in guns blazing, firing with impunity. Of course, detractors will emerge whenever a franchise experiences changes, and sometimes they are quite vocal. While *SOCOM* purists may decry the new approach as sacrilege, in many ways it makes the game more accessible to more casual players.

SOCOM 4 takes place over the course of six days. You play as Ops Commander Cullen Gray, who's sent to Southeast Asia to put down a coup by a group of insurgents called the Naga, as well as rescue NATO. To this end you'll command two two-person teams. One team consists of a pair of Navy SEALs who pack some vicious firepower, and the other is a more lightly armed South Korean outfit.

Seeing that this is *SOCOM*, commanding your buddies is simple enough. You just aim where you want them to go and press left or right on the D-pad to send either team to the location. What's cool is that in *SOCOM 4* your AI brothers

MAKE YOUR MOVE!

SOCOM 4 will take advantage of Sony's Move Controller. Simply put, you move the character around the world with the "touchstick" and aim your weapons with the wand like Move Controller. If you've never played a shooter like this, expect a bit of a learning curve. Of course, you can always go old school and play the game with a DualShock 3 controller.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

In SOCOM 4 your AI buddies are ready are intelligent. This will make for some rather varied gameplay. If you want to you can just let your buddies do all the small-arms fighting while you call in air strikes. The thing is, though, just as your buddies are smart, so are the guys you're fighting.

YOUR BUDDIES

The Navy SEALs pack a serious wallop, while the South Korean troops are more lightly armed.

- 01 You can manage your squad enough to make sure they're all in the game.
- 02 The game's AI is smart enough to suppress the enemy by the Navy SEALs in unnamed Southeast Asian country.
- 03 The game's AI is smart enough to suppress the enemy by the Navy SEALs in unnamed Southeast Asian country.

"COMPARED TO TO PREVIOUS ITERATIONS... SOCOM 4 IS LESS REALISTIC..."

in arms are significantly more intelligent than they were before. This means that they'll more intelligently engage with the enemy without you having to babysit them.

One of the most exciting things about SOCOM 4 is its support for the Move Controller. That being said, purists can still choose to play the game with the DualShock 3. Playing the game with the Move Controller is similar to playing a shooter on the Wii. You use the Navigation Controller to move around and you aim with the Move Controller. That said, if you've never played a shooter like this, expect a learning curve. ☺



PS3

GAME DETAILS



SOCOM 4

INFO

Publisher: Sony
Developer: Zipper Interactive
Platforms: PS3

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Up to 32 players online; co-op not announced yet

GENRE

Third-person shooter

RELEASE DATE

2011

SUITABLE FOR

Anyone who likes SOCOM or wants to play a shooter with the Move Controller

ANDY SAYS

The slow pace of previous SOCOM games drove me crazy—though I understood why they played like that. Frankly, I'm looking forward to a more run-and-gun SOCOM to see how it compares. I think it'll be right up my alley.

WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ The game is more accessible now
- ♥ The Move Controller is more precise than the Wiimote

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✖ SOCOM purists won't like that it's less realistic

PS3 XBOX360 Wii PC DS



GAME DETAILS

HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS PT.1

INFO

Publisher: Warner Bros. Interactive
Developer: EA Bright Light Studio
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, PC, DS

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE
TBD

GENRE

Action-adventure

RELEASE DATE

Fall 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Everyone whos 10+ and a fan of the books or movies

Fans of the Harry Potter series of movies and games will surely appreciate this installment. That said, hardcore gamers will probably yearn for a richer gaming experience.

WIL SAYS



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Darker overtones than past games
- ♥ Visually striking special FX

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ The action comes to a complete halt when choosing a spell
- ✗ The film-to-game success ratio is pretty low

HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS PT.1

The Death Eaters are hot on your heels in this gloomy adventure • Words: Heather Bartron

Just as we were starting to feel the unmagical effects of *Harry Potter* movie withdrawal, another film is on the horizon, which means, of course, another game. Enter *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1*. Promising epic action as well as some rather dark adventures, this chapter in the *Harry Potter* series aims to deliver where previous releases have failed.

No longer under the protective wing of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Harry Potter is on the run in this third-person action-adventure. Getting away unscathed won't be easy. At every turn you will find both new and old enemies. Of course, magic is your right-hand man and your only means of survival. Also, the new particle system looks stunning next to the dark scenery.

So why in the world would the "Chosen One" and company leave behind all they know and love to set out on a death mission? Voldemort of course. The much-anticipated war has broken out and there is only one solution: find the Horcruxes before it's too late. The race to find Ravenclaw's Lost Diadem, a magical item, is on. Can they find it before Voldemort finds them?

As most of us are well aware, game adaptations of popular films don't exactly have the best track record. That said, we have hope that this game will finally give *Harry Potter* fans a taste of what they've been looking for. Besides, what better way to celebrate the release of *Deathly Hallows* in theaters than shooting up villains with your trusty magic wand, console-style? ☺

GAMEPLAY



All of Harry's training is being put to the test. Seek solace behind objects and shoot at your discretion with a fighting system that mirrors popular third-person shooters



Wipe that stupid smile off of the Death Eaters' faces with a spell of your choosing, but beware of action hiccups caused by switching out which type of Sorcery you use.





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COUPONS

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01 SPLINTER CELL: CONVICTION



In *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Conviction*, you're a fugitive agent inhabiting a world in which your environment is your primary weapon. Be ready to adapt your strategy on the fly to make use of the environments and crowds around you. Amass a network of underground allies to aid you in your quest and to provide you with crucial high-tech gadgets. Maintain constant vigilance to stay one step ahead of your pursuers, and struggle to unmask the people who've framed you and forced you into this life of shadows.

Says BestBuy.com contributor, **bigtman**: "This game is stunning in terms of stealth and tactics. I love it!"



02 RED DEAD REDEMPTION



Red Dead Redemption propels you into the American West at the turn of the 20th century, a time of tectonic change in which the entire future of the West was being rewritten. Explore the story of former outlaw John Marston as he embarks on a journey across the storied frontier. As the legendary West of old begins to give way to the modern age, you must conquer unique challenges in pursuit of ultimate redemption.

Says BestBuy.com contributor, **pbrugalett**: "If you like role-playing games, with tons of action, in an incredibly real recreation of the Texas/Mexican border, then get *Red Dead Redemption*."



03 DRAGON QUEST IX: SENTINELS OF THE SKIES



Your adventure awaits in the epic DS role-player, *Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies*. Create your own hero and explore the farthest reaches of the world to uncover secrets, exotic beasts, and long-lost treasures. Plus, thanks to multiplayer gameplay, you can connect with up to three friends and experience the vast landscapes and undiscovered lands together.

Says BestBuy.com contributor, **sincethesurgery**: "This is a *Dragon Quest* game just about any RPG fan can get into."



04 METAL GEAR SOLID: PEACE WALKER



Play as legendary special ops expert, Snake aka Big Boss, as you perform solo operations and explore the thrilling storyline set in 1974 towards the end of the Cold War. Team up via multiplayer co-op mode and administer medical help to colleagues, share munitions, and use the Snake formation to provide cover for your team's blind spots.

Says BestBuy.com contributor, **AvengerX**: "This game practically feels like a full-fledged sequel to *Metal Gear Solid 4*. If you are a MGS or stealth fan, I highly recommend picking it up."

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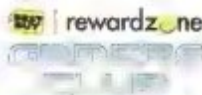
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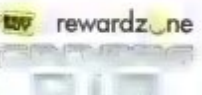


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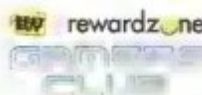


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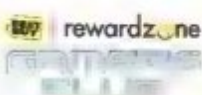


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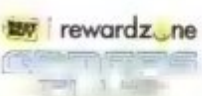


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05 KANE & LYNCH 2 DOG DAYS

Kane and Lynch 2: Dog Days takes you on a heart-pumping journey through the streets of Shanghai. Play as the psychopathic Lynch or the ex-mercenary Kane as you evade your pursuers and jump, run, and fight your way through seedy streets and gritty rooftops. Take on the underworld in this brutal crime shooter but keep an eye on your character—you never know if he'll snap. The Fragile Alliance multiplayer mode, arcade modes, single-player, online and offline co-op modes offer plenty of opportunities to test your shooting skills as you side with these two unhinged criminals.

Be sure to check out the official @GAMER review in this issue!



06 FINAL FANTASY XIII

Face your destiny as you travel through the worlds of Cocoon and Pulse in *Final Fantasy XIII*. Discover diverse allies who will join you in your fight, and execute punishing attacks with powerful weapons and magic. Summon the enigmatic Eidolons with the evolved Active Time Battle system. With seamless transitions between real-time gameplay and in-game cinematics, *Final Fantasy XIII* draws you into the mystery and the magic of the series like never before.

Says BestBuy.com contributor, **Impartial**: "This game is fantastic on all levels. Expect at least 60 hours of solid gameplay. Well done, Square Enix."



SEE
PAGE
64



07 METROID: OTHER M

Samus is alive—saved when a baby Metroid gave its life to protect hers. Picking up where the events of *Super Metroid* ended, Samus begins telling her own tale. This personal and revealing story of her failings, flaws, and motivations is what drives the action-packed plot of *Metroid: Other M*. Searching through a decommissioned space facility known as the Bottle Ship, Samus unveils the truth behind her past. Prepare to suit up for an adventure unlike any you've experienced before.

Be sure to check out the official @GAMER review in this issue!



08 CALL OF DUTY: MODERN WARFARE 2

This harrowing sequel to *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* thrusts you once more into the haze of battle. Arm yourself with sophisticated tools of destruction and get ready to stare death in the face as you enter a raging conflict. Experience the rigors of battle and struggle against long odds to seize victory. The awesome power of war comes alive in all its grit and glory in *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2*.

Says BestBuy.com contributor, **Nick626**: "This game is amazing; the graphics are great, the realistic movement and interaction stunned me."



everyone gets a controller. Finally, the **kids win**. This quality time is presented by the **ESRB**.

Because the **Andersons** play video games, there's a system in place to make sure they **bring home the right ones**. This is how that system works: First, Mom and Dad select games using the ratings on the box.



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REDACTED

The logo for Call of Duty: Black Ops. The words "CALL OF DUTY:" are in a large, yellow, stencil-style font. The word "BLACK OPS" is in a smaller, grey, stencil-style font below it. The background is dark and textured, resembling a night vision or thermal image.

CLASSIFIED!
FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

Call of Duty [redacted] military-

Activision's Infinity Ward studio: Toppling of

Developer Treyarch

run-and-gun

War films.

TOO HOT
FOR
SEPTEMBER!

THIS IS A
SECRET!

CODED FOR SECURITY



[REDACTED]



PS3 XBOX360 Wii PC

GAME DETAILS

CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Treyarch
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, PC

MP RATED
MATURE 17+

GENRE **TRD**
First-person shooter

RELEASE DATE
November 9, 2010

SUITABLE FOR
Dudes who like shooting stuff

BEST BUY

ISSUE 3

TO BE
UNCLASSIFIED
NEXT ISSUE!



DEF JAM RAPSTAR

Bust some grooves with your crew • Words: Andy Eddy

Def Jam Rapstar takes the sing-along concept to the world of hip-hop, and lets you upload your performances from your living room for the whole world to see—and judge.

Def Jam Rapstar enables you to rap along with the rappers who created the originals. You'll be graded by how well you've timed your rap to hit the beats and also on nailing the lyrics, thanks to pitch-, rhythm- and vocal-recognition engines. Much like how other games give you stars based on the quality of your performance, Def Jam Rapstar will award you a number of mics by how well you did, and more mics means more gameplay potential unlocked. The game will have at least 45 songs

on the disc (with 30 immediately playable when you first start the game), and Konami expects to build up a big song library with regular releases of downloadable content.

Three main modes will be available: Career mode will let you experience the growth of a

rookie rapper on the road to riches; Party mode will let multiple players participate in duets and battles; and Freestyle mode will offer up unique beats from some of the biggest and best producers, so you can bust your own rhymes without limitation. The latter mode should be a big proving ground for you to show off your skills—and you can bet there'll be some fledgling artists getting attention on YouTube and other social networks.

At the E3 show in June, I sat in on a freestyle performance of two rapper friends. To see them building rhymes and tossing them back and forth was a blast. Soon you'll be able to break it down in private or, if you've got the skillz, in front of the world. ☺

"DEF JAM RAP-STAR WILL AWARD YOU A NUMBER OF MICS BY HOW WELL YOU DID."

RAPSTARS ON YOUR CONSOLE

Def Jam Rapstar's "rap-a-oke" side is the main appeal, but another aspect may keep you even busier: music videos. With prime artists and tunes—such as Dr. Dre with Snoop Dogg ("Nuthin' but a 'G' Thang"), LL Cool J ("Mama Said Knock You Out") and Salt-N-Pepa ("Push It")—you can count on it being a fixture at parties, not only as interactive entertainment, but also to add background visuals when people aren't playing.



DR. DRE NUTHIN' BUT A THING

SONG SETTINGS

GAME MODE

SOLO

LENGTH

FOOL

VOCALS

ON

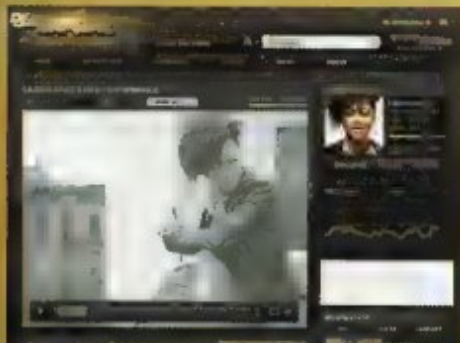
DIFFICULTY

RAPSTAR

HARD

FACT

Before he became Dr. Dre, he was known by the name "Dr. F," based on the nickname of Auburn University's favorite basketball player.



RAP IT UP, EVERYONE

Konami and 4mm Games expect *Def Jam Rapstar*'s built-in ability to share your efforts with others to power its popularity. It's part of a growing wave of games offering links to social networks: Activision's *Blur*, for example, lets you broadcast selected race results or milestones over Twitter. *Def Jam Rapstar* will take the concept even further.

The game's Freestyle mode lets you use a system camera and save a performance to your hard drive, but also spiff up the clip with special effects and make it public on *Def Jam Rapstar*'s official website. Once there, members of the community will (hopefully) vote on how good it was (or was not).



▲ GET READY, GET SET... FLOW!

The website also provides you with a virtual battleground for head-to-head mic fights and plenty of trash talk on the side.



PS3 XBOX360 Wii

GAME DETAILS



DEF JAM RAPSTAR

INFO

Publisher: Konami

Developer: 4mm Games

Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Two-player competitive mode on the same system

GENRE

Music

RELEASE DATE

October 5, 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Budding rappers looking to test out—or have others check—their flow

WIL SAYS:

I watched people fall in love with the *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band* games but I could never get into them. As a hip-hop fan, *Rapstar* appeals to me much more than playing in a band of plastic instruments.

WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ It appears to be a well-thought-out, rap-along hip-hop music game for fans
- ♥ Some great tunes, and classic music videos to go with them

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Many of the music videos we saw weren't displayed at a great resolution (which could improve for the final product)

R.U.S.E.

Tabletop generals get a virtual war experience • Words: Tom Price

The history of the real-time strategy genre (which includes games like *StarCraft* and *Command & Conquer*) can trace its roots directly back to the tabletop war games people have been playing for decades. And by "people" I don't just mean chubby guys in beards and tight t-shirts. Fans of the tabletop strategy simulation include people like Eisenhower and Napoleon, real-world field commanders who worked out their battles beforehand on large three-dimensional maps, with game pieces representing their real-world military forces.

R.U.S.E. from Ubisoft is a modern, real-time strategy videogame that flaunts its tabletop roots. It's right there when you're engaged in combat over a theatre of war; zoom back enough and you'll see your entire map set upon a table in a room, as though you were one of those famous commanders giving orders from HQ. Zoomed down to its closest camera view, you can see your

actual units—armor, men, aircraft—acting out their commands of war to scale. Sure, it's a neat trick, but it's also a highly engaging experience, making you feel like a real WWII general.

Some hardcore WWII strategy and tactics freaks may find fault with *R.U.S.E.* But you can't deny that it gets a lot of the basics of war right, while still sustaining a fun videogame experience. As in other RTS games, you have to build bases and other defenses with money you acquire through harvesting resources. And as per usual it's really just a huge game of rock/paper/scissors. Anti-tank guns beat tanks, which beat infantry, which beat anti-tank guns. *R.U.S.E.* does not reinvent the wheel, nor the RTS.

What's going to really set *R.U.S.E.* apart, other than its great-looking maps and clever *R.U.S.E.* card system (see sidebar), is its sheer volume of gameplay. You'll have a chance to exploit all of your classical military tactics across all theaters of WWII, something that should make strategy fans very happy. ☺



COMBAT READY

Supporting your troops with other troops is key. These anti-tank guns are screwed if enemy infantry shows up, which is why the boys are here.

STRATEGY \\\



01 EYES OPEN

Keep recon units forward so you can see what the enemy is up to on the front lines. You can do this with planes, infantry, or special recon units.

02 STAY HIDDEN

Units can stay hidden in cities, and even infantry can take out heavy tanks if sequestered within city walls. Forests provide cover too.

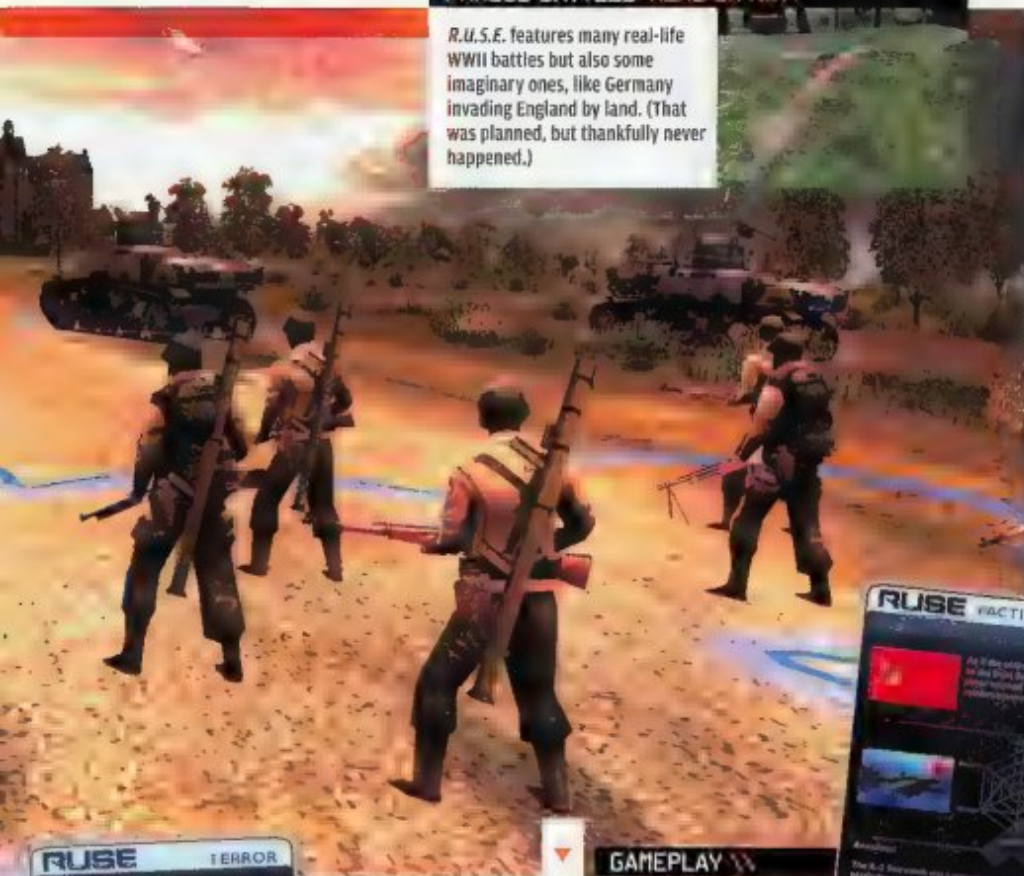
03 TENACIOUS D

Protecting your home base is important, so feel free to pepper your local area with machine gun nests, tank killers, and anti-aircraft installations.

"YOU'LL SEE YOUR ENTIRE MAP SET UPON A TABLE IN A ROOM, AS THOUGH YOU WERE ONE OF THOSE FAMOUS COMMANDERS GIVING ORDERS FROM HQ"

FAMOUS BATTLES: REAL OR NOT?

R.U.S.E. features many real-life WWII battles but also some imaginary ones, like Germany invading England by land. (That was planned, but thankfully never happened.)



GAMEPLAY



▲ Ruses like "radio silence" (shown here) only work in one section at a time. Use them wisely.



▲ Air power is crucial, but control of the skies is even more important.



▲ Advanced units like these flame tanks can be researched once you build the proper base to produce them.

PS3 XBOX 360 PC

GAME DETAILS



R.U.S.E.

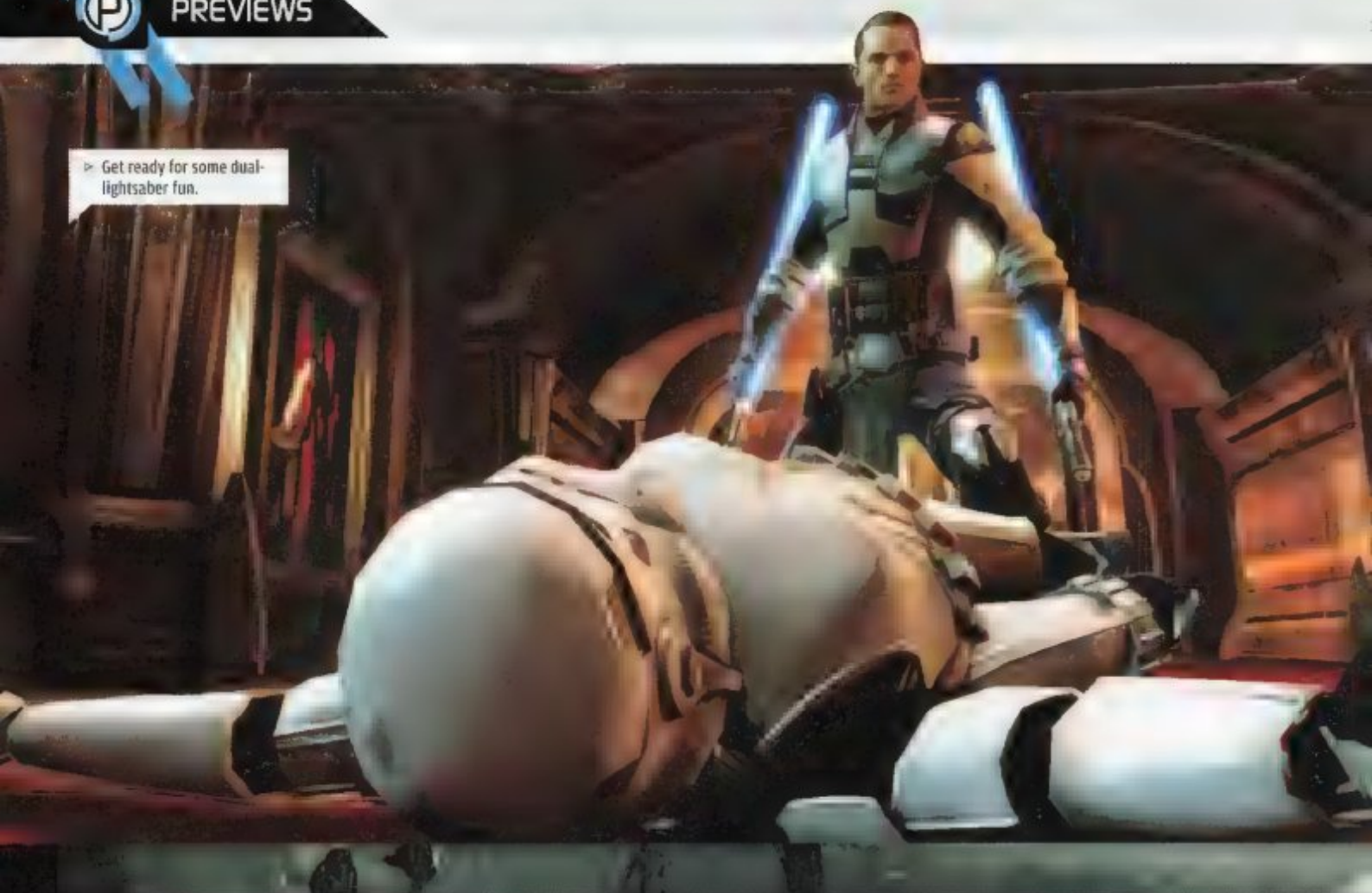
INFO
 Publisher: Ubisoft
 Developer: Eugen Systems
 Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC
MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE
 2-4 players online
GENRE
 Real-time strategy
RELEASE DATE
 September 7, 2010
SUITABLE FOR
 Armchair generals and *Band of Brothers* fans

WIL SAYS

I love military history, so being able to recreate actual battles is especially appealing. The tabletop battle planning looks pretty cool, too.

WHAT'S GREAT:
 ♥ The game board actually looks like an old-school planning table
 ♥ Realistic battles
WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:
 ✖ Hardcore strategy types may not like the user interface

► Get ready for some dual-lightsaber fun.



STAR WARS: THE FORCE UNLEASHED II

Darth Vader's former protégé wields dual lightsabers and new Force powers through another chapter in the intergalactic epic.

• Words: Alex Porter

The Force Unleashed cast you as Sith Galen Marek, aka Starkiller, Darth Vader's secret apprentice. Your mission: Seek out and kill all remaining Jedi. Starkiller spent most of his time with an android called PROXY and his female pilot, Juno Eclipse. The game ended with him switching sides and sacrificing himself to save the Rebel Alliance leaders. It sure looked like Starkiller was done for at game's end, but it seems he survived, and that's where *Unleashed II* picks up.

Now, Starkiller sets out to discover his own identity and to reunite with his one true love, Juno. He's again the pawn of Darth Vader—instead of training his protégé as a ruthless

assassin, the dark lord is attempting to clone his former apprentice in order to create the ultimate Sith warrior. So while Starkiller seeks out Juno, Vader hunts him down.

With devastating new Force powers and the ability to dual-wield lightsabers, Starkiller cuts a desperate swath through enemies familiar to fans of the Star Wars films, unleashing some fresh combo moves not available with a single weapon. With Marek's Force powers now massively increased and backed up by an improved targeting system, you'll enjoy greater attack precision and more precise control of your powers, plus greater interaction with the environment. Also on tap are some new powers such

as the Mind Trick, which turns enemies against their allies. But what set the first game apart was the storytelling. If this sequel has dramatic storytelling on par with the first—which actually surpassed the second film trilogy—*Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II* won't disappoint Star Wars fans or action gamers. ☺

**"WHILE STARKILLER
SEEKS OUT JUNO,
VADER HUNTS HIM
DOWN."**

GAMEPLAY \\\

NEW FORCE POWERS

In *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II*, Starkiller has an even more awesome selection of Force powers at his disposal.

Additionally, Starkiller's dual lightsabers will be customizable as he finds new crystals throughout the game. Can you say "black crystals"?



RECOGNIZABLE FOES

Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II boasts a ton of enemies, both new and old. In addition to Darth Vader, who informs Starkiller that he's a so-called "failed clone," expect to see Boba Fett as well.



In addition to more traditional Force powers, Starkiller will also be able to use Mind Tricks to manipulate his enemies.



POOR IMPULSE CONTROL?

Starkiller performs a freefall from the hanging cities. Good thing he was able to summon his ship, the *Rogue Shadow*.

PLATFORMS: SOMETHING FOR ALL

PS3

With its powerful CPU, we expect action to be nice and fluid on the PS3.

XBOX 360

Known for its powerful graphics, the game's many effects will look stunning on the Xbox 360.

Wii

With the Wiimote we're looking forward to some wild lightsaber battles. The Wii version will also offer Force battles for four players.

DS

Nintendo fanboys will welcome being able to play this *Star Wars* title on the DS using the stylus.

PC

Who says PC gaming is dead? Not us, and not Lucas. *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II* will run like a beast on a powerful PC.

PS3 XBOX360 Wii

PC DS

GAME DETAILS

STAR WARS: THE FORCE UNLEASHED II

INFO

Publisher: LucasArts

Developer: LucasArts

Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360,

Wii, PC, DS

MULTIPLAYER / ONLINE

4-player multiplayer (Wii only)

RELEASE DATE

October 26, 2010

GENRE

Action

SUITABLE FOR:

Star Wars fans and action gamers will be in luck

WIL SAYS:



I was eight when *Star Wars: A New Hope* came out, so *Star Wars* is pretty serious business to me. From what we've seen, *The Force Unleashed II* looks to be a promising addition to the *Star Wars* canon.

WHAT'S GREAT:

♥ Dual lightsabers that you can upgrade

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

✗ Since Starkiller supposedly died in the last installment, LucasArts had to get clever in order to bring him back

EA SPORTS



The MMA gaming scene is set to get a little more interesting • Words: William O'Neal

Our free-market economy is one of the many things that makes America awesome: Competition brings out the best in all of us. While THQ's *UFC Undisputed 2010* is awesome, we're happy that it's gonna get some competition. Enter EA Sports MMA.

Entering into an arena (or hexagon, or octagon, or cage, or ring, or alley, or whatever) where there already is an unrivaled champion takes creativity and imagination. And when it comes to these two characteristics, EA Sports has shown us that it has both in spades.

You can either play as one of the world's top fighters (Fedor Emelianenko and Randy Couture feature heavily in the game) or create your own fighter. The game boasts personalities such as Jimmy Lennon, Jr. introducing the fighters and Big John McCarthy working the cage, while Frank Shamrock and Mauro Ranallo call the action. Adding to the game's appeal, EA Sports MMA boasts one of the most creative online modes we've ever seen: Live Broadcast.

Live Broadcast lets you compete in matches that are broadcast online for other gamers to watch. You create your fighter and make your very own hype video. If your hype video is

good enough you'll get noticed by an EA Sports Promoter.

EA Sports MMA shows a lot of promise. Of course, being a rookie, it's not perfect. The standup felt a little sluggish but this is something that we hope EA Sports addresses before the game is finished. Additionally, it would be nice if the UFC's president, Dana White, hadn't been such a chump about trying to ban UFC fighters who signed to be in the game. (He's since relented.) Criticisms aside, EA Sports MMA is definitely a game that we're looking forward to playing. We tip our hats to EA Sports for Live Broadcast and can't wait to see the crazy hype videos that gamers put together. ☺

"EA SPORTS MMA BOASTS ONE OF THE MOST CREATIVE ONLINE MODES EVER..."

Detailed Fighters
Every fighter is intricately detailed in EA Sports MMA.



STRIKEFORCE

EA Sports MMA is partnering with Strikeforce so expect to see many of those fighters as well as logos that you would see during a Strikeforce-sanctioned match.

Stamina is key. When grappling an opponent, your fighter better be in shape.

Being grappled you'll be able to tell when the other is getting tired.



GAMEPLAY \\\

EA Sports MMA uses what the company calls Total Strike Control on offense and Advanced Defense System on defense. If you've played other EA Sports fighting games, such as *Flight Night*, it won't take you long to pick up the controls—they're fairly intuitive. Also, the controller rumbles to give you feedback about what your opponent is attempting to do so that you can act or react appropriately.



A NEW SERIES?

Submissions are really interesting in EA Sports MMA. In an arm bar, for instance, the arm being locked is shown in a partial x-ray sort of view where you can see the bone being bent, twisted, and otherwise compromised. On offense, this shows you how much more you have to go to complete the submission, while on defense it shows you how precariously close you are to having your arm or leg snapped.

PICK YOUR PLATFORM!

PS3? XBOX 360? YOU'RE ALL GOOD

With many titles the PS3 and Xbox 360 versions can have subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) differences. We have it under good authority that both the PS3 and Xbox 360 versions of EA Sports MMA are virtually identical.

LIVE BROADCAST

You can catch promoters' eyes in two ways: If your hype video is good enough and generates enough buzz, other gamers will want to see you either beat the living crap out of an opponent; or, depending on your personality, watch you get manhandled. Also, if you're just a contender who kicks everyone's tail from Las Vegas to Sao Paulo, your online presence will also grow.

PS3 XBOX 360

GAME DETAILS



EA SPORTS MMA

INFO

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Tiburon
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Live Broadcast, online, 1-on-1

GENRE

Sports

RELEASE DATE

Fall 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Anyone who digs MMA and the unique thrill that comes from forcing another competitor into submission

ANDY SAYS:



Getting into a competitive match is good for players wanting to test their skills and ability to learn new styles. Having a serious challenger in the MMA genre should push both THQ and EA.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Live Broadcast is one of the coolest online features we've seen
- ♥ Button mashers, the scourge of all fighting games, will have a hard time winning in EA Sports MMA



WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Similar to other sports games, some fight fans will be bummed that not all of the stars in the MMA world are in the game

PS3 XBOX360 Wii PC



SHAUN WHITE SKATEBOARDING

INFO

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft Montreal
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360,
Wii, PC

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE
TBD

GENRE

Action sports

RELEASE DATE

Fall 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Fans of Shaun White or action sports in general



GAME DETAILS



It's cool to see someone making a different type of skateboarding game. That said, it'll be interesting to see how the whole line-creation thing is accepted.

WHAT'S GREAT:

♥ *Shaun White* is unlike other skateboarding games in that you can alter the environment

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

✕ That said, skateboarding purists may not like the ability to change the environments on the fly

WIL SAYS



Shaun White Skateboarding has some truly unique areas.

SHAUN WHITE SKATEBOARDING

The Flying Tomato is called upon to use his skateboarding skills to bring the soul back to a bedraggled city • Words: Heather Bartron

The world isn't lacking for skateboarding videogames, which poses a problem for developers. Sure, they could make a game and slap Shaun White's name on it, but Ubisoft chose a more ambitious route. The city in *Shaun White Skateboarding* begins dull and lifeless, and it's up to you to give it vibrancy. The city is broken up into five districts, and through gameplay you literally paint the town with your wheels while you unlock gear and new skating prospects. *Shaun White* is all about problem-solving. Is the rail you're grinding not long enough? No problem. Just press the shape button and use the analog stick to direct the rail in the direction you want it to go. No ramp in sight? Forget about it. Alter ordinary flat roads into something rivaling Marseille Skatepark.

This isn't to say that skating takes a backseat to turning the city into a skater's dream, and there are more than 80 tricks in your arsenal. If EA's *Skate*

series focuses on the technicalities of skating and Tony Hawk plays like a fast-paced trick fest, *Shaun White* is different. Instead of toying around with pre-existing niches, *Shaun White* creates its own. It is a stylized and different take on the skateboarding genre. The controls are simplified and the imagery is much more imaginative than in previous skating games.

With the future of the city on your hands, you have to know that *Shaun White Skateboarding* isn't a game shackled to just a single-player mode. Multiplayer is available and offers an online co-operative mode as well as a versus mode if you are feeling competitive. With so many ways to shape the world in which you skate, *Shaun White* compels you! ☺



CREATE YOUR OWN LINES

If there's not a clear line, *Shaun White Skateboarding* gives you the freedom to create your own lines as you attempt to bring some life back to the city. *Shaun White* also adds his own personality to the game, making it even more fun.

JUGGALOS?

PREORDER SPECIAL

While we're sad to say that there are no Juggalos in *Shaun White Skateboarding*, if you preorder the game from Best Buy you'll "be able to literally paint the town with this motly crew of backwoods Circus Freaks." And no, we still don't know how magnets work.



The Next Big Thing is 35% Smaller

Near Actual Size!



**"35% smaller,
but 35% better!"**
-Jason Chen, Gizmodo

POWER A Pro Pack Mini™

Step up your game with the POWER A Pro Pack Mini™ for Wii™. Its compact design is surprisingly big on features. Punch, throw, swing or drive with accuracy and comfort, even after hours of play.

See video and more at PowerA.com/mini



POWER
Amplify Your Experience



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VEGAS

The place to play!

Make life outside the vault exciting.

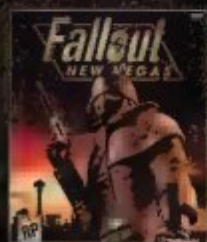
Prepare for
the future!



Words: William O'Neal

PS3 XBOX 360 PC

GAME DETAILS



FALLOUT: NEW VEGAS

INFO

Publisher: Bethesda Softworks

Developer: Obsidian

Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

MULTIPLAYER

Single-player only

GENRE

RPG

RELEASE DATE

October 19, 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Lovers of intense role-playing games and *Fallout 3*

Preorder Exclusive

500 bonus points and the
Messiah Pack for RPG
members who preorder

BEST
BUY

FALLOUT: NEW VEGAS

Enjoy your stay in New Vegas—but watch out for mutants,
ex-cons, and other assorted miscreants





Wil Says:

in New Vegas you can gamble at the casino, win money, and you can use it to get some fancy equipment.



If there's one thing that developer Obsidian is known for, it's bending genres. Such is the case with *Fallout: New Vegas*. While technically an RPG, it plays a lot like a shooter. That said, hardcore fans will no doubt appreciate *Fallout: New Vegas'* deep story, character development, and commitment to the franchise's pedigree. @GAMER took a road trip to Obsidian's office in Orange County, California, where we were given the chance to poke around in the world of *Fallout: New Vegas*.

The game opens with your character—a courier in a post-apocalyptic wasteland—being harassed by some slick-looking gangsters. The head of this group of miscreants is a fella named Benny, who relieves you of a platinum chip you're delivering before shooting you in the face. Next thing you know you're waking up in a doctor's office in the town of Good Springs, where you've been patched up. Here's where *Fallout: New Vegas'* RPG elements are first made apparent. Character creation is extremely deep. Once your character is created, you step out of the doctor's office into the town of Good Springs, where you encounter other townspeople that help you become acclimated to the game's gameplay mechanics.

For those who aren't familiar with the world of *Fallout*, here's a quick synopsis: In the midst of a nuclear apocalypse, people survived by retreating into underground vaults. Any unfortunate creatures that were left outside of the

vaults became mutants, and everything—from humans to insects to reptiles—have mutated into exactly what you'd expect: really nasty characters that mean to do you harm.

Of course, the nuclear apocalypse happened some time before where this story picks up, and people have already started repopulating the surface. Unlike characters in previous *Fallouts*, your character in *New Vegas* was never a vault dweller. In fact, he was born and raised in the wasteland. However, when the good doctor patched you up, he outfitted you in a traditional vault-dweller uniform, so gamers familiar with the series will recognize it. Additionally, your in-game interface system (the "Pip-Boy") is back and you'll use it to do everything from managing your inventory to accessing the VATS fighting system, which enables you to pause and map out ahead of time how you'll attack your enemies.

While this new chapter takes place after *Fallout 3*, *New Vegas* has no real connection to its predecessor. This freed up the development team to come up with an entirely new and fresh story. There's a conflict between the New California Republic (which controls an extremely powerful solar plant... a plant whose significance will be made clear through gameplay), a pro-government organization and Caesar's Legion.



ENVIRONMENTS



Gamers who prefer shooters will welcome *Fallout: New Vegas* real-time shooting. Gamers who are more RPG-oriented can use the VATS interface that they're more familiar with, while more frenetic gamers will be able to go in guns-ablazin' thanks to the iron-sight-style aiming. Traditionalists will love *Fallout: New Vegas*' RPG elements, such as the return of the karma system where your

relative goodness or badness is tracked, and the game's various factions will take kindly or unkindly to you based on how you've treated them and their enemies.

Fallout: New Vegas boasts an awesome cast of voice actors. Ron Perlman (*Hellboy*) is back as the narrator, while Matthew Perry (*Friends*) plays Benny, the jerk who shot you in the face. Wayne Newton takes on the role

of "Mr. New Vegas," a radio DJ that you'll hear throughout the game.

When it arrives in October, *Fallout: New Vegas* is the kind of title that will please RPG purists and shooter fans alike. With some unique gameplay elements, an awesome story and an amazing legacy, *Fallout: New Vegas* should go a long way to upholding its family name. **C**

PREORDER MERCENARY PACK \\\



MERCENARIES



Wil Says:

You might want to kill these mutant flies before they kill you.



THAT'S A BEAUTY

The weapons in *Fallout: New Vegas* are amazing. A .45 Smith & Wesson can be customized to look pretty, or you can outfit it with extended magazines and scopes.



THE REPEATER

This Winchester Repeater is great for dealing with a lot of enemies simultaneously. Those times when I battled a gang of escaped cons come to mind.



PICK 'EM UP

When using VATS, scoped rifles are great for their slow-motion bullet-time effects that



EVOLVING THE SERIES

Fallout: New Vegas does a great job of mirroring the look and feel of Las Vegas. There are several casinos in the game, and all have their own themes. There's the Gomorrah, which is the seedy, sex-themed casino, as well as the Tops, which is a Brat Pack-themed outfit. Also, paying homage to the real Las Vegas, New Vegas is run by a shadowy figure named Mister House, a character loosely based on Howard Hughes. While exploring the various casinos in New Vegas, we had fun gambling. As you'd expect, you'll need money to get you through Fallout: New Vegas. I actually doubled my cash flow in about 30 minutes playing blackjack... not bad.



DO UNTO OTHERS > KARMA IS KEY IN FALLOUT: NEW VEGAS

01 STEP RIGHT UP
In *Fallout: New Vegas* you can actually gamble at the game's many casinos.

02 PLAY NICE...
You can play nice or be a jerk. Be warned, the game is keeping track of your karma.

03 WEAPONS!
The game boasts a ton of awesome weapons that you can upgrade to your liking.

04 WHEEL OF FORTUNE
Are you naughty or nice?



Wil Says:

These are mutants aplenty in *Fallout: New Vegas*. Are those gacked?



W I I O

Nintendo's Wii took the world by storm when it was released in November 2006, and since then has been played by millions of gamers worldwide. It goes without saying that Nintendo's main competitors (Sony and Microsoft) have been thinking of ways to bring that motion-control magic to their own consoles. Finally, the ability to control your PS3 or Xbox 360 with the flick of a hand is here.

Interestingly, each company has approached motion-controlled gaming differently. Sony's Move controller features a handheld device that looks like a high-tech magic wand (with its key feature being a light-up ball on the end). The Move controller and an add-on camera track what you are doing, and then translates it into input for manipulating the characters and environment within the game.

Microsoft, on the other hand, has created a controller-less device that follows the movements and sounds of gamers via a visual sensor. Kinect can discern the differences between players, so it should know—to an extent—who is playing and who (or what) isn't. Some players have worried

that a family pet or someone walking in front of the Kinect sensor might compromise its functionality at a critical moment, but Microsoft has told us that there's more than just straight-up visualizing at play with Kinect and that it "reads" the room to know what's going on—to, conceivably, and accurately, keep track of participants, even if the family dog or Grandma get into the frame.

Both devices go on sale this fall (September for Move, \$99.99; November for Kinect, \$149.99), so it'll be interesting to see which solution will be

**"THE DAY YOU
CAN CONTROL
YOUR PS3 OR
XBOX 360 WITH
THE FLICK OF A
HAND IS HERE"**

a hit with gamers. It's also worth noting that, though the Move may seem like a better deal, the \$100 bundle only includes one motion controller, whereas one \$150 Kinect sensor will work for your entire family. Extra Move motion controllers will run you \$49.99 each.

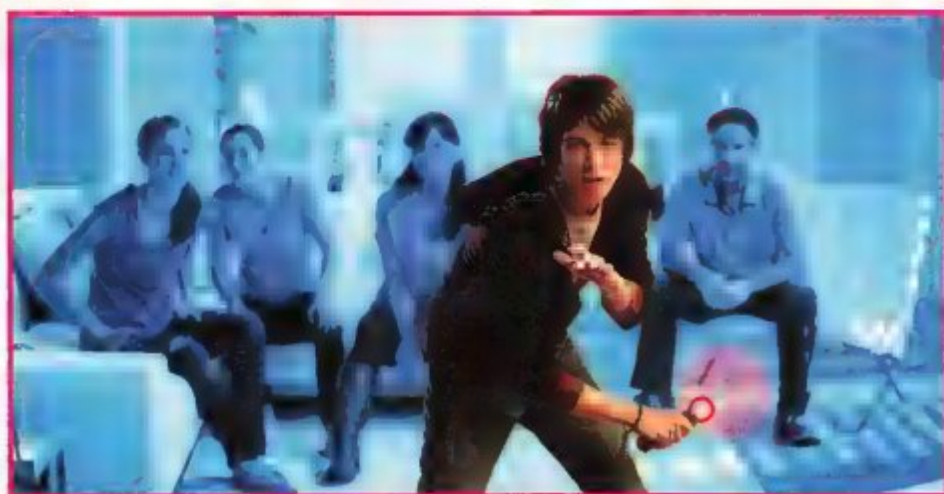
To give you an overview of what you can expect for both systems, we've compiled a tour of games designed to work with the Move and Kinect. This is hardly a complete list—many more are on the horizon!—but let this be a good start to determining which system (if any) you might want to invest in this fall.

VS

This fall, Sony and Microsoft are facing off with dueling motion-controlled gaming devices, the PlayStation Move for PS3 and Kinect for the Xbox 360. What will each system offer and which games can you look forward to? Check out our side-by-side comparison.

KINECT

Words: Andy Eddy and William O'Neal



MOVIE

6 Move Games:

CARRY A BIG STICK
Sony's augmented reality system puts you into the game



SPORTS CHAMPIONS

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment America; Developer: Zindagi Games; Release Date: September 2010

Packed in with the \$99.99 Move bundle, *Sports Champions* consists of six games: *Disc Golf*, *Table Tennis*, *Beach Volleyball*, *Archery*, *Gladiator Duel*, and *Bocce Ball*. Since each game also boasts three modes—Champions Cup, Free Play, and Challenge Mode—you're looking at a lot of gameplay. Similar to *Wii Sports* (arguably the most widely played game on the Wii), *Sports Champions* makes great use of the Move Controller. While *Sports Champions* may sound like a casual title, the gameplay is surprisingly deep.



SINGSTAR DANCE

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment America; Developer: Sony Computer Entertainment Europe; Release Date: Holiday 2010

This already-popular franchise gets a major upgrade with *SingStar Dance*. With two Move Controllers and two microphones, up to four entertainers can play at the same time. While it's sure to be a hit, the Move Controller only offers one detection spot for your dance moves, so it feels a little less like dancing than its Kinect counterpart.



EYEPET

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment America; Developer: London Studio; Release Date: Fall 2010

Designed to be played on the floor, *EyePet* is a virtual pet so customizable that no two *EyePets* will be the same. Using the PS3's camera and Move Controller, *EyePet* actually interacts with items in the room. Players—more like guardians—use the Move Controller to do everything from feed their *EyePet* to wash and style it. *EyePet* will be available in 2D and 3D modes.

6 Kinect Games:

WAVE YOUR HANDS
Microsoft's Kinect turns your entire body into one big controller



KINECT ADVENTURES

Publisher: Microsoft; Developer: Cloud Head Studios; Release Date: November 4, 2010

Kinect Adventures is a platform game that lets you explore a virtual world. You can jump, run, and climb, and you can use your hands to interact with the environment. The game is designed to be played on the floor, and it's a great way to get your kids off their screens and into the living room. The game is available for the Xbox 360 and the Kinect sensor.



CHILD OF EDEN

Publisher: Relentless; Release Date: July 2011

Playing *CoE* is like "conducting" a symphony with your hands. Sweep your hand to move a cursor around the screen, and you can pick up and throw objects. You can also use your hands to shoot a volley. Clap your hands to change your shot type. Wave both arms to launch a fireball. The game is a great way to get your kids off their screens and into the living room.



DANCE CENTRAL

Publisher: Electronic Arts; Release Date: November 2010

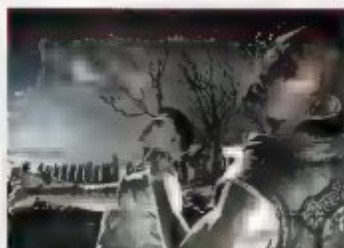
The makers of *Rock Band* have created what could be the perfect music game for Kinect. As a song plays, the display shows you what moves you need to do next. You can follow the moves on the screen, or you can use the Kinect sensor to track your movements. The game is a great way to get your kids off their screens and into the living room.



KUNG FU RIDER

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment America; Developer: SCE Japan Studio; Release Date: September 2010

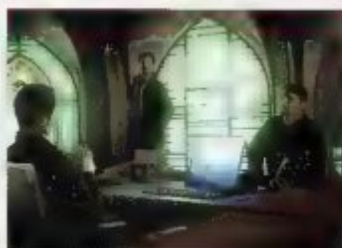
While the premise of Kung Fu Rider is utterly ridiculous, the gameplay is fantastic. Private detective Toby and his assistant Karin have to escape the Yakuza in Hong Kong. The problem? They must use office furniture to evade the bad guys. You'll use the Move Controller to steer, jump, lay down (to slip beneath obstacles), beat up bad guys, and sprint.



THE FIGHT: LIGHTS OUT

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment America; Developer: XDEV; Release Date: October 2010

The Fight: Lights Out harkens back to the days of bare-knuckle boxing. In Campaign mode you'll train your fighter to become the baddest fighter around through 12 venues and 12 bosses. Using the Move Controller as well as the PlayStation Eye, we found the bobbing/weaving gameplay to be extremely precise. The Fight will offer two-player multiplayer in your living room or online.



HEAVY RAIN

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment America; Developer: Quantic Dream; Release Date: Available Now

Currently available, the cinematic Heavy Rain also features built-in support for the Move. This story-driven adventure follows four characters as they attempt to track down a notorious serial killer. How will it work with the Move Controller? If, for example, your character has to knock on a door, you'll actually hold up the controller and make a knocking motion.

PROS



- ♥ More seasoned gamers will appreciate being able to hold on to a controller
- ♥ Using the Move Controller is really intuitive
- ♥ The controller feels very accurate and precise

CONS



- ✗ Many of the launch titles feel very casual. More hardcore gamers may want to wait for additional implementations of the technology
- ✗ It feels less innovative than the Kinect device



FORZA MOTORSPORT 4 (WORKING TITLE)

Publisher: Microsoft; Developer: Turn 10 Studios; Release Date: 2011

Described as a proof-of-concept experiment, Forza 4 dramatically shows off what the Kinect can do. We were able to maneuver around a parked car and highlight key parts of the vehicle. For example, holding our hand (or cursor) over an info icon explained what we were looking at. On the road you hold your hands like you're gripping a steering wheel and rotate the "wheel" to make the car turn on the track.



KINECT JOY RIDE

Publisher: Microsoft; Developer: Big Park; Release Date: November 4, 2010

Playing similarly to Forza 4, this arcade-style racing game adds stunt moves you can do for bonuses while in midair, such as spinning or flipping the car before landing back (hopefully, wheels down) on the road to continue the race. The cartoony action promises to be fun for gamers of all ages, but adding in the motion control might make it even more appealing... or frustrating if the game doesn't offer crisp, accurate control



YOUR SHAPE: FITNESS EVOLVED

Publisher: Ubisoft; Developer: Ubisoft; Release Date: November 4, 2010

The fact that it's a Kinect game means there's nothing you need to stand on, hold in your hands, or strap to your body in this exercise/yoga trainer. The device monitors not only your movements, but also your posture, so it'll be easy to flag someone for standing incorrectly during exercises. From the demos we saw at E3, it seems like the trainer will offer a diverse set of routines for virtual exercisers.

PROS

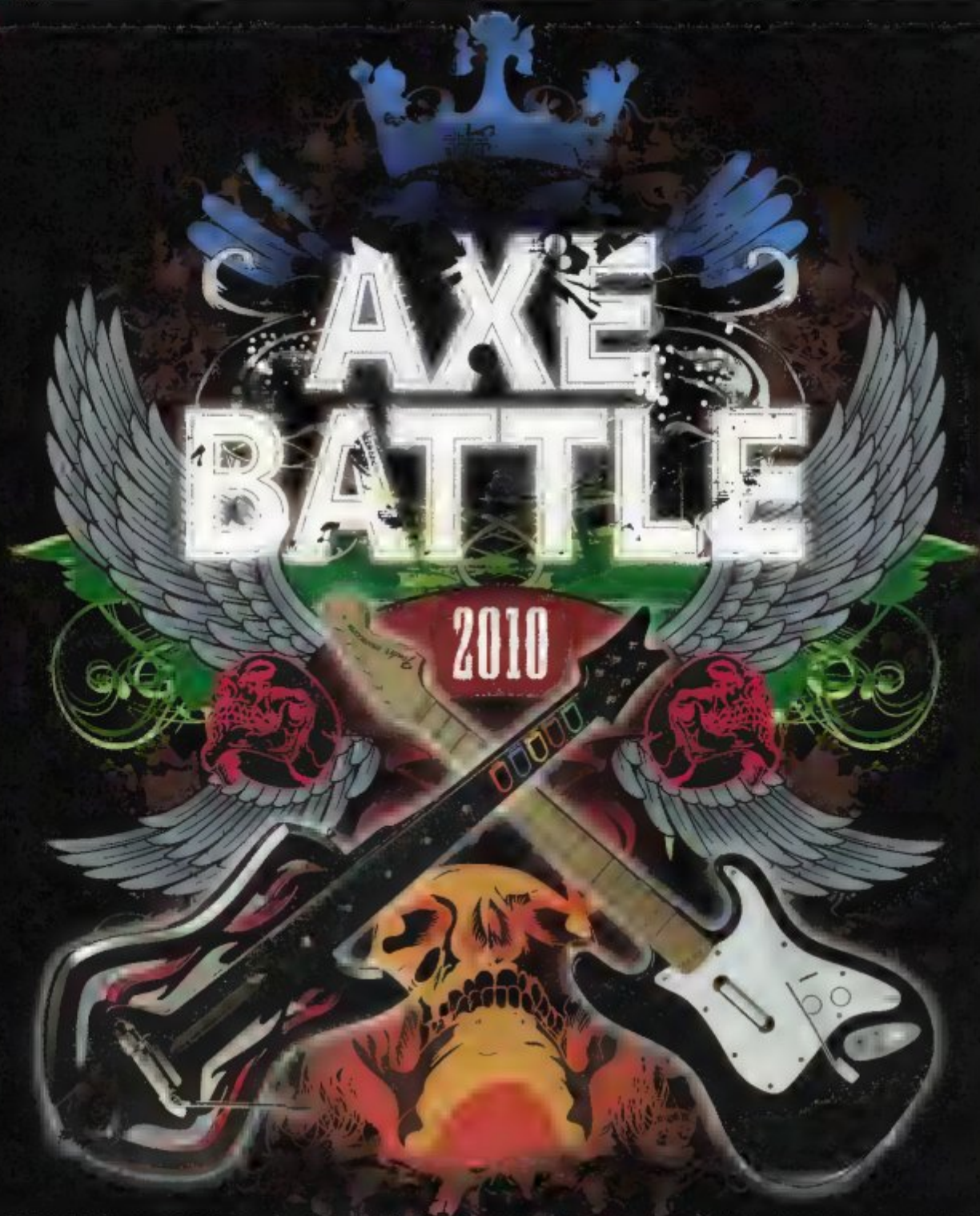


- ♥ Kinect doesn't require you to hold any controllers, which also means there's less risk that you'll end up accidentally throwing something through your TV
- ♥ Kinect also allows you to seamlessly interact with your Xbox 360 interface, moving through menus and services like Facebook, Netflix, and Twitter

CONS



- ✗ \$149.99 is pricey for a peripheral
- ✗ Add-on peripherals with high price tags aren't usually well-supported on the software side
- ✗ We worry that many gamers won't have enough space to devote to Kinect, which could limit its functionality and entertainment value



GUITAR HERO AND ROCK BAND BOTH PULL OUT THE BIG GUNS THIS YEAR. WHICH WILL EMERGE VICTORIOUS?

It's been two years since *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band* really went head-to-head with full-fledged, main-franchise releases. This year, the gloves are off: Both games are making dramatic changes and additions—and moving in sharply different directions. Which one will come out on top? Let's break them down, piece by piece.

Words: Joe Rybicki

GAME PLAY



GUITAR HERO: WARRIORS OF ROCK

Though *Warriors of Rock* isn't adding much in the area of core gameplay, just about everything else is getting a major overhaul. A story-driven Quest mode has you unlocking special abilities for each of the game's characters—abilities that can dramatically alter scoring, adding an element of strategy to any song.

Advantage:

Rock Band 3. There's so much new here, it's like learning to play music games all over again.



ROCK BAND 3

While *Guitar Hero* is refocusing on the game side of music gaming, *Rock Band* is digging deep into the music side with Pro mode. Here, you can learn songs note-for-note on keys and guitar (and nearly so on drums); at Expert level you'll learn enough to pretty much play the songs on any real instrument.

TRACK LIST

GUITAR HERO: WARRIORS OF ROCK

Activision is doubling down on the rawk this year, stepping away from the wildly varied (some might say schizophrenic) setlist of *Guitar Hero 5* and back toward the guitar-heavy rock that made the series famous. Notable artists: Megadeth, Jethro Tull, DragonForce.

ROCK BAND 3

Rock Band introduces a new instrument this year: keyboards. As a result, the set list is looking slightly more poppy than in previous games. But keyboards also allow the game to pack in classic, keys-heavy cuts, and the setlist is also loaded with plenty of straight-up rock. Notable artists: The Doors, Yes, Huey Lewis.

Advantage:

Rock Band 3, for variety. But Harmonix should expect to hear the same gripes *Guitar Hero 5* got last year.

EXTRAS

GUITAR HERO: WARRIORS OF ROCK

The new "Quickplay+" mode will offer 13 challenges for each of the 90-plus songs on the disc, as well as for almost all downloadable songs from *World Tour* onward, offering lots of replay value and incentive to challenge friends. The game also appears to be focusing more enthusiastically on special animations for each song, reinforcing the larger-than-life nature of the playable characters.

ROCK BAND 3

An achievement-based career mode will feature more than 700 goals, as well as "road challenges" that the designers say draw influences from games like *Mario Party*. It's clear the game is aiming for a nonlinear career experience, but it's possible it may come off as simply unfocused.

Advantage:

Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock. Giving players in-game benefits for digging up old DLC is clever, and the social, competitive focus of Quickplay+ should prove addictive.

PS3 XBOX 360 Wii

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS



GUITAR HERO: WARRIORS OF ROCK

INFO

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Neversoft (360, PS3),
Vicarious Visions (Wii)
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

1-4 players together, 8 online

GENRE

Music

RELEASE DATE

September 28, 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Hard rockers into star power



PS3 XBOX 360 Wii DS

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS



ROCK BAND 3

INFO

Publisher: MTV Games/EA
Developer: Harmonix
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, DS

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

1-7 players together

GENRE

Music

RELEASE DATE

October 26, 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Aspiring musicians



Rock the house in *Rock Band 3* with your own Adam Lambert look-alike.

STAR POWER

GUITAR HERO: WARRIORS OF ROCK

In spite of some legal entanglements with No Doubt and the estate of Kurt Cobain, Activision has gained the enthusiastic support of some heavy hitters in music. Gene Simmons of Kiss provides narration and voices a major character, while Dave Mustaine of Megadeth composed a song specifically for the game.

ROCK BAND 3

George Harrison's son Dhani apparently served as a consultant on the game, and the franchise is perpetually talked up by Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, and the members of Green Day. But Harmonix seems content to let *Rock Band 3* speak mostly for itself.

Advantage

Warriors of Rock. Big names don't make the difference between a good game and a mediocre one, but they can help get folks who might not otherwise care interested.

CHALLENGE

GUITAR HERO: WARRIORS OF ROCK

The *Guitar Hero* franchise has always pummeled *Rock Band* in terms of raw challenge, and the speed-heavy setlist of *Warriors of Rock* should make for the most difficult five-button gameplay we've seen yet.

ROCK BAND 3

But with Pro mode, *Rock Band 3* opens up entirely new horizons of difficulty. At Expert level, you'll be playing guitar literally note-for-note,

on either a controller with 102 (!) buttons, or a real, stringed guitar. It's going to be fascinating to see how the top *Guitar Hero* phenoms take to this new challenge.

Advantage

Tie. In terms of raw challenge, it's *Rock Band 3* by a mile. But the exacting precision required to excel in Pro mode may turn so many players off that this comes out as a wash.

WHAT MUSIC TEACHERS WILL SAY

GUITAR HERO: WARRIORS OF ROCK

"Why don't you learn to play a real instrument?"

ROCK BAND 3

"Why don't you learn to play a real instrument?"

Advantage

Tie. Adults just don't understand, man.

Guitar Hero shows you've gotta be hardcore to pull off a green mohawk.

INSTRUMENTS

GUITAR HERO: WARRIORS OF ROCK

A redesigned guitar with a detachable body will let you swap out parts for a custom look. The sleek new design also features a larger, firmer strum bar that retains the trademark Guitar Hero—guitar click. No word yet if those redesigned Band Hero drums will finally appear on a system other than the Wii in the U.S., but we're betting they will.



ROCK BAND 3

Rock Band gets a brand-new instrument this year with the keyboard. But it also gets a dramatically more complex, 102-button guitar for Pro mode—and even a fully functional, stringed electric guitar being manufactured by Fender. Also on the docket are slightly refined drums and cymbals.



Rock Band 3, though Warriors of Rock gets points for a slick redesign of the familiar controller.

COST

GUITAR HERO: WARRIORS OF ROCK

You'll be just fine with all your current instruments. That means most players will probably need to shell out just the \$60 for the game.

ROCK BAND 3

Outside of Pro mode, Rock Band 3 will also work with legacy instruments; keyboard parts can even be played on guitar controllers. But for Pro mode you'll need a keyboard (\$80), a new guitar (at least \$150), and a cymbal set (\$40). That's in addition to the game itself.

★ Advantage:

Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock. Recent studies show that \$60 is less than \$330.

THE VERDICT

GUITAR HERO: WARRIORS OF ROCK

By refocusing on more straightforward rock and traditional game-y features, Warriors of Rock is smartly catering to its immense fan base, betting that plenty of players want to play a game, not actually play music. Critics might accuse it of treading water, but fans will likely have no problem with that.

ROCK BAND 3

This ambitious game aims to bridge the gap between tapping colored buttons and playing real music. The dramatic challenge of Pro mode—not to mention the added expense—may scare off casual players, but they'll come back once they realize they can still get a heck of a lot of gameplay in the traditional modes.



★ Advantage:

You. The franchises are diverging and diversifying, which means more options for gamers. Whichever game you choose, you're getting the benefits of two franchises in top form.



CALL^{OF}DUTY

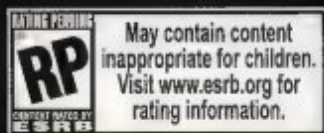
BLACK OPS

11.09.10

"WE WEREN'T JUST IMPRESSED WITH BLACK OPS.
WE WERE BLOWN AWAY."

— OXM

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TOP PICKS



TOP PICKS

RATINGS BREAKDOWN:

@GAMER includes only the best games in our Top Picks section. If you don't see it here, it's probably not worth getting.

2.5—An average game. Just worthy enough to call to your attention.

3.0-3.5—A good game with some flaws. Fans of the genre will probably enjoy it.

4.0-4.5—An excellent game that we strongly recommend.

5.0—A near-perfect gaming experience.



Hey, meet the crew!

@GAMER wants you to know about the best-of-the-best games out now or coming soon, so we've put together a different kind of Geek Squad to help you out.

Josh Augustine

Gord Goble

George Jones

Tom Price

loot. By day, he's an edi-

beef sandwich and a

were made of wood and

sandwich with horse-

and sports games. He's

school lunch: Balogna

entirely sure whether

school lunch: Pigs in a

64

METROID:
OTHER M

64 METROID: OTHER M
Learn more about Samus Aran with a new *Metroid* that harkens back to the series' side-scroller days.

68 MADDEN NFL 11
Will GameFlow and other critical changes make this year's installment better or worse?

72 MAFIA II
Take on big and small missions in this open-world crimefest, and rise through the mob's ranks.

75 LARA CROFT AND THE GUARDIAN OF LIGHT
Get a different perspective on our favorite female archaeologist's latest adventures.

76 STARCRAFT II: WINGS OF LIBERTY
Blizzard took some time away from *WoW* to give us a *StarCraft* sequel. How'd that turn out?

79 CITY OF HEROES: GOING ROGUE
Our take on the latest expansion to NCsoft's "superhero simulator."

80 NEED FOR SPEED WORLD
EA's classic racing series hits the road for some online-only action.

82 KINGDOM HEARTS BIRTH BY SLEEP
Sony PSP gets a turn with the Square Enix/Disney action-RPG mash-up.

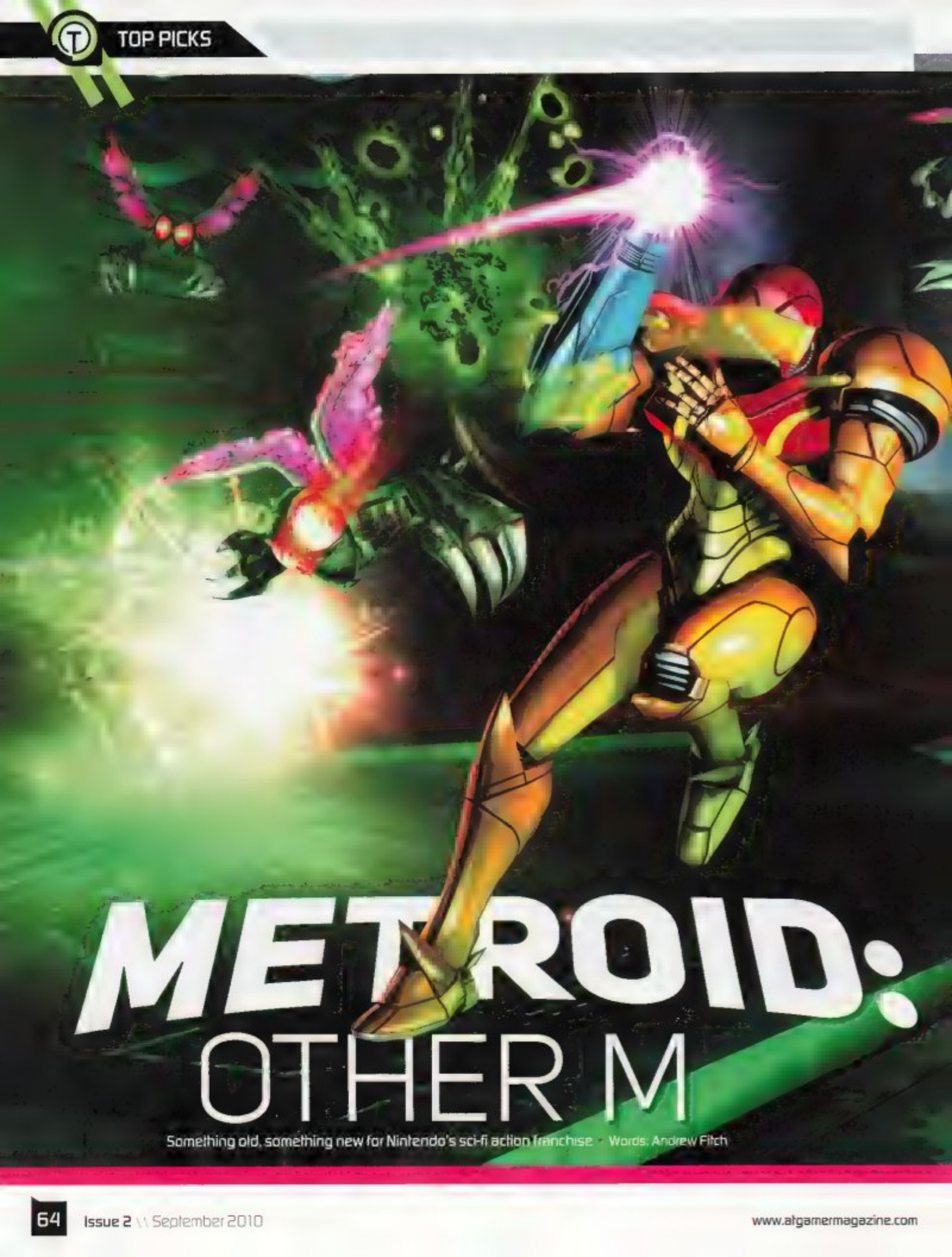
84 KANE & LYNCH 2: DOG DAYS
Contents under pressure and may explode if opened in Shanghai.

86 CLASH OF THE TITANS
Namco Bandai brings us the latest movie game.

87 SHANK
A unique art style is only one part of the package.



TOP PICKS

The background of the page is a vibrant, action-packed illustration from the video game Metroid Other M. It depicts the protagonist, Samus Aran, in her iconic orange and yellow Power Suit, crouching and aiming her blue Arm Cannon. A bright, multi-colored energy beam is being fired from the cannon, hitting a large, pink, insect-like alien creature. The scene is set in a dark, cavernous environment with green, bioluminescent plants and structures. The overall tone is dramatic and intense.

METROID: OTHER M

Something old, something new for Nintendo's sci-fi action franchise - Words: Andrew Fitch



Wii

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS



METROID: OTHER M

INFO

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Team Ninja
Platforms: Wii

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

GENRE

Action

RELEASE DATE

August 31, 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Action gamers who want a fast-paced sci-fi shooter

Exclusive Ringtones!

Three FREE Metroid: Other M Ringtones. Offer only valid for Rewards Zone Gamers Club members with purchase.

BEST BUY

"IT'S DEFINITELY SATISFYING TO REDUCE A ROOM OF ENEMIES TO SMITHEREENS WITH SAMUS' VAST ARRAY OF MOVES."

Metroid: Other M is a classic exercise in the power of expectations. If you're an action gamer, but a newcomer to the sci-fi action franchise, you'll likely focus on what it does well: fast-paced shooting, copious amounts of exploration, and a diverse collection of baddies. But if you're a fan of the 2D, side-scrolling elements of the classic Metroid entries (NES or Super NES) or the first-person exploration and combat of Metroid Prime (on GameCube and Wii), you might focus on the fact that Other M doesn't quite capture either of those styles as well as previous titles in the franchise.

Once Colleagues
Malkovich stings
Samus by calling
her an "outsider"
early in Other M.



In past games, for example, bounty-hunter Samus Aran could seamlessly switch between her regular gun and powerful missiles with the press of a button. In *Other M*, that switch becomes far more cumbersome: You've got to point the Wii Remote at the screen to enter a first-person perspective (which you can do most any time you choose), gather your bearings, lock on to the enemy, and then fire. Sure, it's not too much trouble if you're only trying to fire at a locked door or a prone enemy. But when a ginormous space beastie is bearing down on you, it's frustrating to point the Wii Remote at the screen and have Samus look to the sky instead of straight at the enemy.

Thankfully, first-person missile combat is one of the few areas where *Other M* actually feels clunky—regular third-person combat (especially when it's on a 2D plane) features seamless one-touch dodging and lock-on shooting, and it's definitely satisfying to

reduce a room of enemies to smithereens with Samus' vast array of moves. In classic *Metroid* tradition, you'll find several imaginative mini-boss showdowns—including one particularly harrowing encounter in an elevator shaft. Just be prepared to experiment with trial-and-error strategies, as the enemy's weak points aren't always so obvious.

The *Metroid* franchise is perhaps best known for its sense of exploration, though, and it's here that the first-person mode—which Samus can enter at any time—pays dividends, as looking up and down to explore every nook and cranny reveals hidden passageways and items. It's the exploration that really defines a *Metroid* game—and that ultimately redeems *Other M*. It may not be the pinnacle of the series, but longtime fans shouldn't let that deter them from checking out an overall enjoyable experience. Again, it's all about managing your expectations. ☺

THE ISSUE

Metroid games usually begin with Samus being stripped of her powers in increasingly convoluted ways. It may cause a roll of the eyes every time, but it's also a bit of a necessary evil—after all, she can't simply barge in with her full arsenal from the start or there'd be no challenge. *Other M* gets around this issue with a surprisingly believable explanation: Commanding officer Adam Malkovich (above) simply orders her to lay off the heavy artillery as the game begins, and then slowly authorizes the use of force as the story unfolds.



**"EXPLORATION
REALLY DEFINES A
METROID GAME—AND
THAT ULTIMATELY
REDEEMS OTHER M."**



ANDY SAYS:

It's cool that *Metroid: Other M* goes "retro" without looking like an old game. Many of the aspects that made the original 2D *Metroid* (NES, 1986) so playable are here, but all wrapped in a current-day design, with lengthy cut-scenes, quality voice acting, and first-person viewpoints. It's a nice mix.



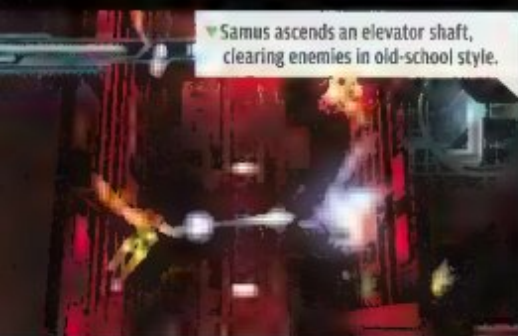
Old Pals: Obviously, Anthony Higgs knows Samus well—he calls her "Princess" after they reconnect.



NOT JUST HANGING OUT

Here's one area that can't be as easily compared to the NES version. As with any major adversary, you'll need to work out the right movement and attack patterns to stay safe/alive, and then take out the threat. Also, we've found that lava in most any video game is bad for your health—so try not to fall. (Yeah, you're right... that's a big duh.)

♥ Samus ascends an elevator shaft, clearing enemies in old-school style.



NERDY NATE

Nintendo localization producer Nate Bihldorff recorded a placeholder voiceover for the nerdy scientist who talks Samus through the game's tutorial. But when pro actors came in for the final cut, none could quite match Bihldorff's nasally intonation, so his voice stayed in the game. The lesson? Don't give up your dream of starring in a game, even if you have to snort like Steve Urkel. After all, doesn't every game need a nerdy scientist?

TEAM NINJA VS. SPACE PIRATES

Nintendo's known for classic family fare like the Mario franchise, so it's a bit surprising that it joined forces with Team Ninja, which made its claim to fame with *Dead or Alive*—aka "that fighting game with girls in bikinis"—and the ultraviolent *Ninja Gaiden*. On closer inspection, this looks like a good fit. After all, Team Ninja has plenty of experience translating a classic NES franchise to modern-day consoles with *Ninja Gaiden*—and unlike most Nintendo characters, Samus has been known to wear bikinis.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ *Metroid's* all about exploration, and *Other M* delivers on that front
- ♥ *Metroid* belongs in 2D—and the spectacular action sequences here prove it



WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ The clunky first-person missile combat doesn't measure up to the rest of the experience
- ✗ Boss encounters include some frustrating trial-and-error elements

- Chatterier Samus
- Alien-esque
- Missile mishaps

OVERALL RATING:



4
/5

gamer



MADDEN NFL 11

Gaming's greatest sports series is more realistic than ever • Words: George Jones

Madden NFL 11, the 22nd incarnation—yup, you read that right—of EA Sports' vaunted football franchise, sports several new features that amplify the intensity, quicken the pace, and make for a more realistic experience than ever before. NFL 11 feels like an important turning point in the series, and EA Sports appears to have discovered the magic formula of simultaneously appealing to hardcore Madden fans, casual players, single-player fans, and the multiplayer set alike. To riff off EA's marketing tagline: It's all in the game now.

GameFlow is the most noticeable new addition. This new mode enables you to play the game like a real NFL player. Instead of calling the plays yourself, your offensive or defensive coordinator sets a game plan based on scouting reports and calls the plays himself. Here's the cool part: As your team comes up to the line of scrimmage, the offensive coordinator will bark instructions for the play ("hold onto the ball as long as you can to set up the screen") into your ear via a headset. If you don't have a headset, the audio simply comes in through the primary

speakers.

GameFlow's other advantage is that, because the coaches call the plays, the amount of time it takes to play a complete game in single-player mode is greatly reduced. This is a good thing if for no other reason than the fact that you can play more games more often.

Like all recent versions, Madden 11 offers multiple play modes. You can play a one-off exhibition game or a full season. You can also play the longer-term Franchise mode, which gives you complete control of a team's destiny—down to details on the coaching staff, stadium construction, and draft choices—for numerous consecutive seasons. One of the game's hidden secrets is the ability to conduct a fantasy draft prior to playing a season or exhibition. It's a great way to play the game, especially if you follow the players more than a specific team.

Visually, the game retains its close-to-lifelike quality with some stunning on- and off-field action. Every now and then, however, a player will "skate" on the field, looking like his feet aren't touching the ground. This is not a big concern, because it doesn't happen that often.

Gus Johnson's addition to the broadcast booth brings a little more excitement to the running commentary. You'll laugh out loud when he refers to Frank Gore as the "Inconvenient Truth!"

On the field, which is where quality counts, Madden 11 retains its authentic edge. NFL contests are intense, brutal affairs, and losing feels like death, both to the players and to the assembled crowd. The Madden series has always done a good job of capturing this intensity, and this year's version does it very well. This is one of the most enjoyable versions of the game ever. 

"GAMEFLOW IS THE MOST NOTABLE NEW ADDITION IN MADDEN NFL 11..."





Of course, the look and feel of the game also received a major-league upgrade.

HEADSET RECOMMENDED: GAMEFLOW AND COACH SPEAK

GameFlow—where you can delegate the play-calling responsibilities to your team's coaches—is a significant addition to the game, and will probably turn out to be the most important new feature in the series since the PlayStation 2 version introduced enhanced production values. We were originally skeptical about this mode; in our minds, Madden's play-calling aspects seemed an integral part of the game. We were wrong. After playing through a full season in Franchise mode, we were hooked for good. The sensation of the coach delivering tinny-sounding instructions in your headset is unparalleled in sports gaming. One important final note: You can audible or choose to call your own plays at any time.



PLAY-CALLING



OLD SCHOOL

While we really loved the inclusion of GameFlow, it's nice to still be able to go deeper and customize your playbook.



HEARING VOICES

The Coordinator Headset has your offensive and defensive coaches giving you updated in-game information.

PS3 XBOX 360 Wii
PS2 PSP

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS



MADDEN NFL 11

INFO

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Tiburon
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, PS2, PSP (reviewed on Xbox 360)

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Up to 6 players in 3-on-3 Team Play mode on PS3 and Xbox 360; 4-player "party mode" on Wii

GENRE

Sports

RELEASE DATE

August 10, 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Any gamer who loves football

COVERBOY

Coverboy Drew Brees and his signature pre-game hype factor prominently.



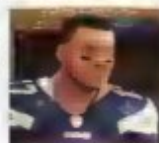


WIL SAYS:

Anyone who read the premiere issue of @GAMER knows how much I love Madden. That said, I couldn't be more excited about Madden 11. I loved being able to play an entire season in one sitting thanks to GameFlow, and 3-on-3 online play is actually a multiplayer mode that my friends and I will take advantage of. Now if only my Raiders could make the post-season. Either way, great job, EA!



"MADDEN 11 GETS THE BLOCKING SCHEMES RIGHT..."



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ GameFlow successfully shortens individual games; when combined with a headset, it greatly boosts the overall intensity
- ♥ Three-on-three online Team Play adds some intrigue to online play

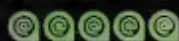
WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Some awkward and relatively stiff player animations
- ✗ The excitement around kickoff and punt returns has been muted

- Accessible
- Hyper-Intense
- Realistic football

OVERALL
RATING:

4.5
/5



@gamer

IT'S THE SAME

Madden 11 feels like the most authentic and realistic version ever, and here's why:

SCREEN!

In the modern NFL, the screen pass is an essential part of every team's play-calling strategy across all downs and situations. Madden 11 gets the blocking schemes and route-running right. Just like real life, you'll break hearts and be heartbroken by the screen.

NO MORE SPRINT

It's been eliminated. This takes some time to get used to, but it enhances the game's authenticity. For the most part, NFL players run hard all the time, and Madden 11 finally reflects that.

THE DEEP GAME IS BACK

Veterans of the series will be simultaneously excited and frustrated by a slightly "looser" game. Deep passes are dialed up more frequently and the improved character animations—receivers can catch the ball while jumping—actually create more opportunities for big plays.

GAMEPLAY



▲ Thanks to GameFlow and the Coordinator headset, it's possible to play an entire season in one sitting.



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MAFIA II

You may not be doing good, but you're doing good for yourself • *GameSpot* August 2010



"HOPEFULLY IT WON'T TAKE
ANOTHER SIX YEARS FOR
US TO SEE MAFIA III..."



Vito has never been a good guy, though a stint in the military during the Second World War at least put his "skills" to good use for his country. When he comes home on leave and reconnects with Joe, his neighborhood partner in crime (literally), his life turns back toward a dark path. Joe makes a call that gets Vito sprung from returning to active duty, then leaves the door open for Vito to join him on his way to becoming a "made man" with the Mafia. At first Vito resists, but family debts (thanks to a brutal loan shark getting his hooks into Vito's now-deceased father) and a lack of desire to work a "normal" job gets him in the big money with Joe. How he earns the big money, though, comes with big risks and big bullet holes.

That's the setup for 2K's *Mafia II*, which comes about six years after the original. Frankly, it's a good thing the game was delayed a number of times, because it's clear that the 2K Czech studio that built it used that time to make it really shine. Empire City is a bustling city of the '40s and '50s, which is apparent as you cruise its streets. If you want to earn money

you can take big missions or undertake smaller tasks—such as jacking cars and taking them to the junkyard to be crushed—and Empire City has plenty of opportunities for whatever you choose to do.

Mafia II is at its most challenging and entertaining during extended missions, such as when you sneak into a location unnoticed or when you have to race from spot to spot within a certain time (though, as Wil notes, there's a heck of a lot of time spent behind the wheel). I experienced some glitches with stealth kills—which threw off a perfect run that would have earned me an achievement for getting through without raising an alarm—but most of the action was compelling and demanding. Destructible cover, a standard feature in most of today's gun-based games, is handled nicely; there are lots of spots you can use to stay protected, but none of them will let you get too comfortable for extended periods.

Hopefully it won't take another six years for us to see *Mafia III*, and with any luck whoever develops it will make the necessary adjustments and corrections to improve the sequel's gameplay even more. 

GAMEPLAY NUANCES \\\



UNCOVERING UNCOVERED COVERS

A pact between 2K Games and Playboy turns Playboy magazines into virtual collectibles. Players are used to searching for and finding items, but finding a Playboy cover and being rewarded by a titillating centerfold image is certainly unique.



HEY, C'MON IN!

The game's Empire City is detailed, as you'll see when you start touring the city. Unlike many open-world games, you can enter many buildings. In fact, there's an achievement/trophy for robbing five stores in less than five minutes.

PS3 XBOX 360 PC

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS



MAFIA II

INFO

Publisher: 2K Games

Developer: 2K Czech

Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

GENRE

Action-adventure

RELEASE DATE

August 24, 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Open-world game enthusiasts and armchair Mafioso looking to become "made"

VENI, VIDI, VICI, VITO

Just look at the guy 2K Games made the main character. How could you not like his chances of coming out on top?





Boyhood Buds
Vito may start by following Joe, but he'll quickly be out doing his own thing.

The fastest bullet moves nearly a mile per second. [World Book]

WIL SAYS:



Watching Andy play, I kept thinking: "Bad guys sure have to drive a lot!" The Godfather movies showed the mob going to or coming from somewhere, but we didn't have to endure the entire trip to set up the scene. Can't these tedious transitions be eliminated?

"Listen, I asked you nicely last time... I DON'T WANT SMOG IN MY SHOES, OKAY?!"



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Missions are quite diverse
- ♥ Having the ability to take cover enables you to strategize success (or at least survival)
- ♥ Mafia II's Empire City feels like a living, breathing metropolis

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✕ Vito becomes a little too reckless in some of his missions
- ✕ Travel time, traffic, and traffic cops can put a damper on the pre- or post-mission mood

- Big gun battles
- Big explosions
- Small conscience

OVERALL
RATING:

4
5

Game

GAMEPLAY

BLOW'D UP, SIR!

The most impressive moments come when things explode. That's when the physics and particle systems kick in.



CUT FROM A DIFFERENT CLOTH

Though hardly a make-or-break aspect, realistic clothing does enhance your level of immersion into the gameplay.



TYPICAL COPS AND ROBBERS \\\



TRY TO KEEP GUNS POINTED AWAY FROM YOU...

In order to avoid "assuming the position," take your time completing missions and driving. Cops will give chase if you break too many traffic laws. Oh, having good guns helps, too.

LARA CROFT: GUARDIAN OF LIGHT

A new angle on the goddess of raiding tombs • Words: Tom Price

At first glance, many longtime fans of the Tomb Raider series and its iconically busty heroine might scoff at the look of Lara Croft & the Guardian of Light. What is that thing, a Diablo clone? But despite such a seemingly extreme departure from the franchise's normal perspective, this downloadable game (on XBLA, PSN, and Steam) is a true Tomb Raider experience with all the clever puzzle solving and exotic exploration you've come to expect.

Caught in the middle of a battle between two ancient gods, the game takes the third-person perspective and moves it to an overhead, isometric view that's reminiscent of many classic RPG and dungeon crawlers. Whatever graphical limitations the isometric level design imposes are mitigated by puzzles that are more cohesive and satisfying to complete when viewed from above.

The game's environmental puzzles are great, but what really stands out is the furious gunplay. Fighting enemies has never been the best part of any Tomb Raider game, but here it's immensely satisfying. The overall experience is heightened even more by a ton of collectibles and in-game achievements that unlock upgrades. While this game doesn't carry the Tomb Raider moniker, it's definitely worthy of the name. 

GAMEPLAY



Guardian of Light boasts two big differences from earlier games in the franchise: a unique co-op campaign and much better combat.

ANDY SAYS

I really enjoyed the Diablo-esque camera angles. Since Lara Croft does spend a lot of time crawling around dungeons, this added tremendously to the overall quality of the game.



HEAD-TO-HEAD

The co-op campaign of *Lara Croft and the Guardian of Light* is quite a different experience than the single-player adventure. For one, it's not just two Laras running around, but Lara and an ancient Mesoamerican god named Totec. They have different abilities, which can and may be used in concert to tackle the puzzles, which are designed differently for co-op play.

Get some! In addition to just wailing on bad guys, Lara also has to deal with booby traps.

PS3 XBOX360 PC

GAME DETAILS & RATINGS



LARA CROFT AND THE GUARDIAN OF LIGHT

INFO

Publisher: Square Enix
Developer: Crystal Dynamics
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

GENRE

Action

RELEASE DATE

August 18 (Xbox 360),
September 2010 (PS3 and PC)

SUITABLE FOR

Old-school gamers, empowered women, and fans of downloadable budget games



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Has the heart and soul of a great Tomb Raider game
- ♥ Weapons are a blast



WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Fixed camera makes some action sequences difficult
- ✗ Even with a total of 12 hours of gameplay (single-player and co-op), I still wanted more!

gamer

- Puzzling
- Isometric hawtness
- Classic

OVERALL RATING:



4.5 / 5

STARCRRAFT II: WINGS OF LIBERTY

In the words of a random, bald space marine: "It's about time"

• Words: Jordan Baughman



Has it really been over 12 years? It's surprising considering that, whenever Blizzard's original *StarCraft* is mentioned by a game critic, it's always accompanied by words like "seminal" and "groundbreaking." With so much time gone by, fans have understandably developed titanic expectations for this sequel. Now that it's out, the question is no longer whether or not *StarCraft II: Wings of Liberty* will buckle under the weight of its own hype, it's how many million copies will it sell because the game is absolutely amazing?

For all of the greenhorns out there, the *StarCraft* universe centers upon the perpetual conflict between the animal-like Zerg, the noble Protoss and the resourceful Terrans.

The original *StarCraft* ended on a cliffhanger (thanks again for the wait, Blizzard) and *Wings of Liberty*—the first chapter in the *StarCraft II* trilogy—picks up four years later. Newcomers are brought up to speed via a detailed narrative during the game's installation.

The story focuses on Terran Jim Raynor, a recognizable face to series fans. As you execute missions through the galaxy with Raynor's Raiders, you'll unlock new combat units and earn money that can be spent on weapon upgrades, mercenaries, alien tech, and much more back at your command ship. The story is an absolute blast to play, where one hour can easily turn into two, which can turn into

five, which... you get the idea. In terms of multiplayer gameplay and design, *StarCraft II* has retained all of its old-school style. Battles ranging from small skirmishes to full-scale assaults are frenetic and unforgiving. All of the staple mechanics for waging war remain unchanged: You build a force of work units to gather resources, while also amassing a giant army to make your opponent very, very dead.

With the summer gaming drought in full swing, *StarCraft* has returned, causing us to blow off social engagements and spend beautiful sunny days glued to a computer screen. We wouldn't want it any other way—except the part about waiting a decade for the next one. ☺



**GAME
OF THE
MONTH**

VISUAL PERFORMANCE

Whether your computer is a gaming monolith or barely meets the minimum system requirements, overall performance is incredibly smooth. On its "Ultra" settings, StarCraft II is truly a sight to behold. Character models feature a ridiculous level of detail (especially when one bites the dust). And there's something grimly satisfying in watching a Terran Marine get sliced in half by a Protoss Zealot.

NEW THAT'S INTERESTING

How successful is Blizzard Entertainment, you ask? The company signed a deal with Korean Air to advertise StarCraft II on two 747 airliners. Yes, that's right. Jim Raynor's handsome mug is painted onto the sides of two Korean Air 747s. In-flight meals include StimPacks (okay, just kidding).



With Battle.net 2.0's comprehensive matchmaking system, you no longer have to be a StarCraft prodigy to enjoy online multiplayer. StarCraft II tests your skill with five "Placement" matches, and then tosses you into one of five leagues, where you can play games with people who aren't 500 times better than you. Starting from the lowest point, the leagues are Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, and Diamond.

PC



STARCRRAFT II: WINGS OF LIBERTY

Developer: Blizzard
Platform: PC, Mac

Release Date: August 10, 2010
Genre: Real-time strategy

ESRB Rating: T
Out now

SUITABLE FOR

Anyone who wants to see what a RTS should be like

WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ This is the StarCraft that fans originally fell in love with
- ♥ Tons of new units, maps, and a steep learning curve for newcomers

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Competitive gamers who are new to the StarCraft scene have a lot to catch up on
- ✗ No LAN support
- ✗ 12 years... really?

- Sci-fi epic
- 'Bout time
- Zerg rush

OVERALL RATING:



5
/5

ONE HOUR CAN EASILY
TURN INTO TWO, WHICH
CAN TURN INTO WELL,
YOU GET THE IDEA.



ANDY SAYS

I'm not a big RTS enthusiast, but I have been hoping for a "best of breed" title that would draw me in to the genre more. It's no surprise that *StarCraft II* is doing just that. I'm not ready for online matches yet, but maybe with a little more time...

GEARS OF STARCRAFT?

It's not like *StarCraft II*'s developers spent the past decade rolling around in the Blizzard money pile, only to throw together some 3D, high-definition update at the last minute. The development team originally experimented with some extreme changes, including a cover system for the Terran Marines. In an interview with Gamasutra, Dustin Browder, the design director on *StarCraft II*, said, "It prevented as much movement from happening on the battlefield, slowing the game down. For our game, [cover] was a disaster."

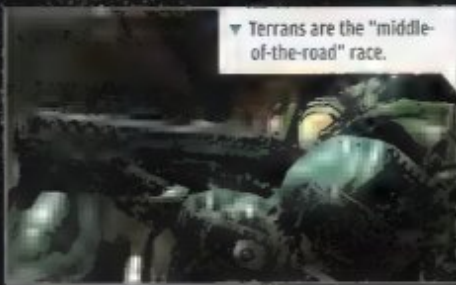
▼ The Protoss utilize advanced weaponry.



▼ The Zerg overwhelm the enemy with tons of units.



▼ Terrans are the "middle-of-the-road" race.

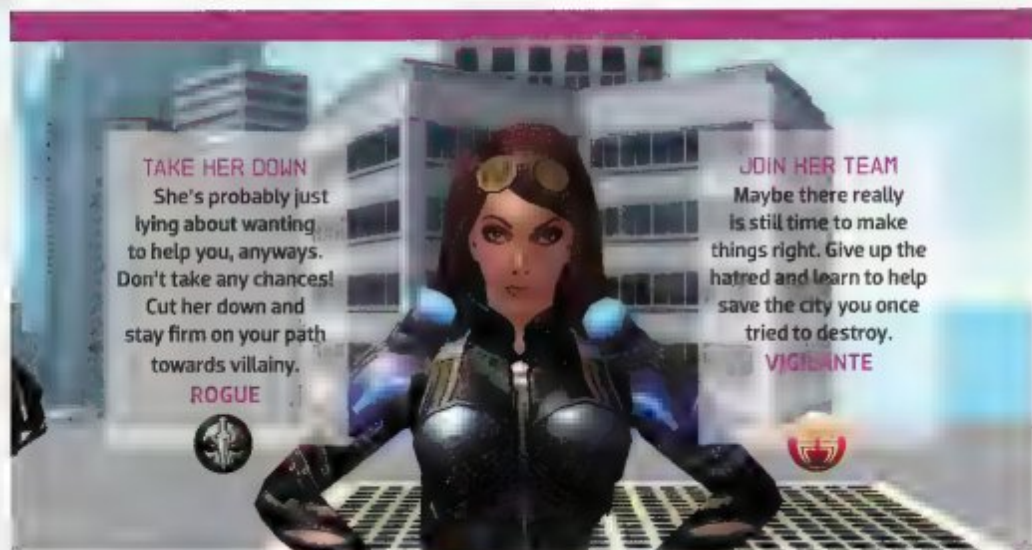


THREE PLAYING 15 DANCE FLOOR

Each race approaches all-out warfare differently to match your own personal taste. Does the idea of overrunning your opponent's base with hundreds of alien monstrosities appeal to you? You're definitely a Zerg player. Do you want the ability to warp in infantry and even entire buildings anywhere on a battlefield? Go with the Protoss. Or would you prefer to deal sweet death to your enemies using tactical nuclear missiles? The Terrans are right for you.

Zerg Roach
It can spit acid, burrow deep, and thinks Terran Marines are delicious.





CITY OF HEROES: GOING ROGUE

Treason has never been this fun • Words: Josh Augustine

You'd be hard-pressed to find another MMO quite like *City of Heroes*. This "superhero simulator" revolves around crafting an epic superhero/villain—including meticulously tweaking the costume and power effects or designing a custom mission to tell your character's backstory.

The namesake "Going Rogue" system in this expansion (which includes the original game) plays to the game's storytelling strengths, introducing two new alignments to the typical Hero/Villain

MAKING THE CALL

Sometimes a hero snaps and seeks revenge; sometimes a villain has a change of heart and finds redemption; and sometimes we just feel like doing something different today. *Going Rogue* offers plenty of opportunities for your character to change his or her outlook on life, but the consequences are drastic. Above is an example of one choice you'll face.

dichotomy: Vigilante and Rogue. A series of expertly crafted quests with morally gray dilemmas enables characters to change alignment. Will your hero break the law to save civilians? If so, they're on their way to becoming a Vigilante—and maybe even a Villain.

But being a Villain has its perks, such as the new Demon Summoning power set—an incredibly cool playstyle that lets your character battle with a fiery whip and summon monstrosities to their aid. Dual Pistols, another added power set, has some of the best animations in the game—I love it when my vigilante dances the bullet ballet.

The expansion's significantly updated graphics help the game feel modern despite its age (*CoH* launched in 2004). They shine brightest in Praetoria, a gorgeous new city that provides a fantastic, story-driven experience for new players. If you're looking for an open-ended superhero/villain experience, join the fight and pick a side... don't worry, you can always change teams later. ☺

ANDY SAYS:

I played the heck out of *City of Heroes* after it debuted, but skipped out when it started feeling repetitive. I may need to reactivate my account, because it looks like NCsoft and Paragon have made major changes to thwart those feelings of samey-sameness.



▲ *Going Rogue* features vast improvements to the visual special effects that accompany your character's power usage.

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS



CITY OF HEROES: GOING ROGUE

INFO

Publisher: NCsoft
Developer: Paragon Studios
Platforms: PC

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Massively multiplayer

GENRE

Online RPG

RELEASE DATE

August 17, 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Comic-book lovers and anyone who wishes they had sweet superpowers



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ A hero's fall from grace provides fertile grounds for epic storytelling
- ♥ Huge graphics improvement
- ♥ Dual-wielding pistols never gets old
- ♥ Who doesn't want to have superpowers?



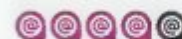
WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Despite the graphics update, it still doesn't quite match up to this year's MMOs visually



- Superpowers
- Massively multiplayer
- Compelling storylines

OVERALL RATING:



4/5

NEED FOR SPEED WORLD

The Internet has a new gas pedal • Words: Gord Goble

Need for Speed World, the latest in a series so old your granddaddy probably played it, is a madhouse. It's a warp-speed, adrenaline-fueled, annihilate-everything freakout that absolutely refuses to slow down for anything. While those who prefer their racing steeped in even an ounce of authenticity will run screaming, most everyone else—even the greenest race rookies—should find plenty of thrills inside NfSW's hugely populated and impressively enormous environment.

Buzz phrases including "massively multiplayer" and "persistent world" mean you're online and connected with hundreds of other human competitors all day, every day. Sure, you can partake in single-player disciplines, where it's you versus a pack of artificially intelligent drones or a bevy of cops. (The latter mode—called "Pursuit" and involving an ever-increasing number of police cruisers—is more frantic and more destructive

than any prior Need for Speed cop mode.) But the real aim here is to get you racing with other people. It's easy to find willing drivers, it's easy to teleport and join races, and it's easy to socialize on or off the track. Lag is rarely an issue.

Remember, though, this is far from an authentic drive: Even a noob with just a keyboard can participate, and as for vehicular damage... well, these cars can probably survive Armageddon. The game's unabashedly arcade nature is no more evident than in its avoidance of believable performance modifications and its reliance on wacky car-enhancing bonuses... but the bonuses are so danged inventive that even power-up

detractors may get hooked.

NfSW is all about the locale. Stealing entire maps from Need For Speed: Carbon and Most Wanted, then merging them together with a few strands of rural roadway, it lets you race for days without seeing everything. From hoity-toity enclaves to packed downtown cores, gorgeous harbors to swanky gambling meccas, the game world initially feels overwhelming. But every byway is driveable—and positioned so you do more than think—which is testament to a winning layout.

Need For Speed World isn't revolutionary. But that doesn't matter when you're axles-deep in law-breaking insanity. 🚗

**AS FOR VEHICULAR DAMAGE...
WELL, THESE CARS CAN
PROBABLY SURVIVE ARMAGEDDON.**



▼ "Wow, that guy is flying! I've gotta rent something faster for the next race..."



THE TOLL BOOTH

Perhaps the best part of all, *NfSW* is free... at least, until it's not. You can download a no-charge version that's fully operable up to Level 10 (a few hours into the game), but you must then buy a \$20 "Starter Pack" to progress any further. Beyond that, EA says it'll adjust the game based on community feedback, though we do know that those willing to invest real-world cash will have an easier time beefing up their capabilities. We hope those who aren't Richie Rich can remain competitive throughout.

NFS THROUGH THE YEARS



HISTORY THAT KEEPS 'EM GUESSING

Need for Speed is to PC racing games as *Godzilla* is to movies: big, brash... and a massive sequel factory. In fact, *Need for Speed World* is the fifteenth entry in what is easily the highest-grossing racing franchise of all time. And another installment is just months away, proving that gamers need speed now as much as ever.

So, what's kept this series, born in Vancouver in 1994, steadily motoring along, while so many of its competitors drove to the great pit stop in the sky? Likely the very thing for which it's sometimes condemned: variety.

Need for Speed is rarely the same game twice, instead altering its approach with each new release—which alienates some, but keeps others interested. *Need for Speed II* (1997) regaled us with high-end exotics and real-life settings, yet *ProStreet* (2007) put us in slug-like VW Golfs on imaginary circuits. *Undercover* (2008) was, in effect, a playable movie, while *Shift* (2009) was perhaps the most authentic edition yet. Now, *World* takes us farther down the arcade road than ever before.

What's next—a rally with Mothra as navigator?



ANDY SAYS:



The few car-based MMOs we've had available to us in the past—such as *Motor City Online* and *Auto Assault*—came and went pretty quickly, but maybe *NfSW* will be the one to click with an audience. I'll kick its tires for a bit, that's for sure.

PC

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS



NEED FOR SPEED WORLD

INFO

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Black Box/EA
Singapore
Platforms: PC

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Massively multiplayer

GENRE

Online driving/racing

RELEASE DATE

Out now

SUITABLE FOR

Hardcore "action" racing fans and rookies alike



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Even a rookie armed with a gamepad or keyboard can get in there and race competently
- ♥ It takes mere seconds to shift from online race to offline cop chase to social hour
- ♥ Power-ups are a ton of fun

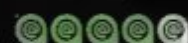


WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Some purists may hate that the game is major arcade racing
- ✗ Power-ups are ultra-inventive, but they're still power-ups

- All-out racing
- Instant accessibility
- Enormous 24/7 world

OVERALL RATING:



4/5



Hack, slash and cast your way through environments based on Disney films.

KINGDOM HEARTS: BIRTH BY SLEEP

Spiky-haired heroes collide with Disney characters in a charming action-RPG

• Words: Matt Cebal

GAMEPLAY \\\

Square Enix's Kingdom Hearts series, which famously mashes up Final Fantasy's emo-spouting pretty boy protagonists with Disney's charming cartoon characters, returns with the PSP-exclusive Birth by Sleep. A prequel to the original Kingdom Hearts, Birth by Sleep provides the perfect introduction for those new to the franchise, while offering longtime fans an experience on par with the original PlayStation 2 games.

You choose one of three playable protagonists, all equipped with Keyblades—the series' sword-like weapon of choice. Sure, you can slice and dice your way through many of the story's imaginative enemies, but the ability to build a "Command Deck" adds strategy and fun to the action. Special Keyblade attacks and acrobatic moves, as well as healing potions and other bonus items, can be loaded into the deck. Each item has a cooldown period, though, so continuously barraging bad guys with your absolute best stuff isn't an option.

In addition to your ever-expanding deck (new items can be found or purchased), you'll utilize the "Shotlock," a screen-clearing attack that has you painting as many targets as possible before a timer elapses; once the clock stops, you're sent pinballing off your enemies in an impressive display of destruction. Furthermore, you can "Dimension-link" with certain non-playable characters, which temporarily grants you their powers. For Disney-philes this is an especially cool ability, as it taps into the unique magic of characters such as Maleficent and Cinderella, meaning you get to wield dragon fire as the former and spin fairy dust-spewing Wish Circles—not nearly as innocent as it sounds—as the latter.

This attention to Disney detail complements Birth by Sleep throughout, making the title a must-play for Mouse fans. There are definitely some Final Fantasy nods—including the design and style of the playable characters—but it's the



Disney-flavored charm that makes this one truly magical. From eavesdropping on the Wicked Witch while she talks to the Magic Mirror, to protecting Cinderella on her way to the ball, Birth by Sleep is brimming with fan-pleasing moments.

That said, don't make the mistake of thinking Birth by Sleep is a kiddie game. On top of the deep combat, seasoned fans of the genre will appreciate looting and

leveling through this sophisticated action-RPG. Rounding out the experience is one of the prettiest presentations to pop off the PSP's wide display. The characters and environments are drenched in detail, boss battles eclipse the screen, animations are spot-on, and the well-acted cut-scenes are hardly distinguishable from a Disney animated film. The camera controls are a little finicky and some might find the many cut-scenes a bit plodding, but, nitpicks aside, Birth by Sleep is as fun as a trip to the Magic Kingdom. ☺

"EACH ITEM HAS A COOLDOWN PERIOD, SO CONTINUOUSLY BARRAGING BAD GUYS ISN'T AN OPTION."

Versus and Arena matches enable warriors to take on each other or join forces. Rumble Racing and Command Board offer up a Keyblade-riding kart racer and a strategy-board game. But the multiplayer's crown jewel is its Dimension-link-sharing: Just as you can borrow powers from in-game characters, this ability enables you to share Command Decks with your friends, giving you access to near-infinite powers.



At first I thought I wouldn't like Kingdom Hearts: Birth by Sleep. But the recognizable characters mixed with a ton of multiplayer options resulted in a game that's more addictive than I realized.

RATINGS



KINGDOM HEARTS: BIRTH BY SLEEP

Platform: Square Enix
Developer: Square Enix
Platforms: PSP

Multiplayer, Online: 2-6 Players (ad-hoc mode)

Genre: Action-RPG

Release Date: September 7, 2010

Suitable For: Action-RPG players, Disney geeks, Square Enix fans

WHAT'S GREAT:

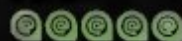
- ♥ Addictive action-RPG formula, complemented by a robust battle system
- ♥ Oozing with Disney fanservice

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Camera gets clunky when action is intense
- ✗ Maybe too many cut-scenes for gamers who just want to kill things

- Keyblade bashing
- Spellcasting
- Disney-flavored fun

OVERALL RATING:



4.5 / 5



KANE & LYNCH 2: DOG DAYS

Bringing out our bad side better than we could have expected — Words: Mitch Dyer

There's only one thing that goes exactly as expected in *Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days*—the "one last job" that should have been simple goes straight to hell. From there, you skid through a downward spiral of unpredictable events that rarely end up as anticipated. *Kane & Lynch 2* consistently caught us off guard, especially in its stomach-churning brutality. In short, a whole lot of really awful stuff happens.

The game's unsettling nature and shock factor are fueled by its visual style. *K&L2*'s "handheld camcorder" perspective layers harsh realism onto the obscene violence, and film grain gives the game a gritty aesthetic. The camera also reacts to the world, so if you're caught too close to an explosion, for instance, the frame distorts and temporarily freezes. And rather than glorifying the gore, pixel blur forces you to imagine the damage you've done.

The story is mostly forgettable, relying more on moment-to-moment action than interesting narrative. As the crack-shot, crackpot criminals—the story centers on Lynch; your co-op partner plays as Kane—you'll fend off aggressive cops and underground gangsters who lurk everywhere. Frequent enemy encounters give you barely a moment to relax, but each area is laden with explosives, destructible cover and enough alternate routes to flank (or get flanked) to keep it interesting. The simpler structure is more straightforward and guarantees a more thrilling experience than the first *K&L*.

We adore the campaign in spite of its length—five hours, tops—because its punchy brevity felt substantial. It did everything we wanted, but that may put potential players off. If you're one of those folks, then *Kane & Lynch 2* still succeeds because of its excellent multiplayer. Everything we dig about *Dog Days*' campaign comes through online, but the innovative multiplayer modes add a unique dynamic to cooperative play: betrayal.

Both *Undercover Cop* and *Cops and Robbers* modes improve on the first *K&L*'s *Fragile Alliance* mode, which returns here. In all instances, a team of greedy criminals tries to loot a loaded vault, kill the intervening police and escape—but original ideas make each mode unique. We fell for *Undercover Cop* right away, because the mole adds paranoia, which can cause someone to crack and kill the entire team. *Cops and Robbers* is hurt by the lack of tension and mistrust, but a team-based deathmatch with the heist at the center still rocks.

After a rough start with the deeply flawed *Dead Men*, we didn't expect *Dog Days* to impress us. True to its overarching theme of unpredictability, though, *K&L2* wowed us in ways we hadn't considered possible. ©

IN SHORT, A
WHOLE LOT OF
REALLY AWFUL
STUFF HAPPENS.

ANDY SAYS



Generally, this kind of game has a tightly linear campaign that almost channels you through a single path. *K&L2* surprised me by offering multiple paths, which adds variety, but also gives you opportunities to flank the enemies. Unexpected fun +1.



IF WE WERE GAME DESIGNERS...

One of the features that defined *Lynch in Dead Men* was that he became a delusional psychopath when he didn't take his meds. We were hoping to "experience" those hallucinations in *Dog Days*, since the story puts you in Lynch's shoes. Alas, the nutjob is properly medicated, so you'll keep your cool and avoid mental freakouts. Bummer.



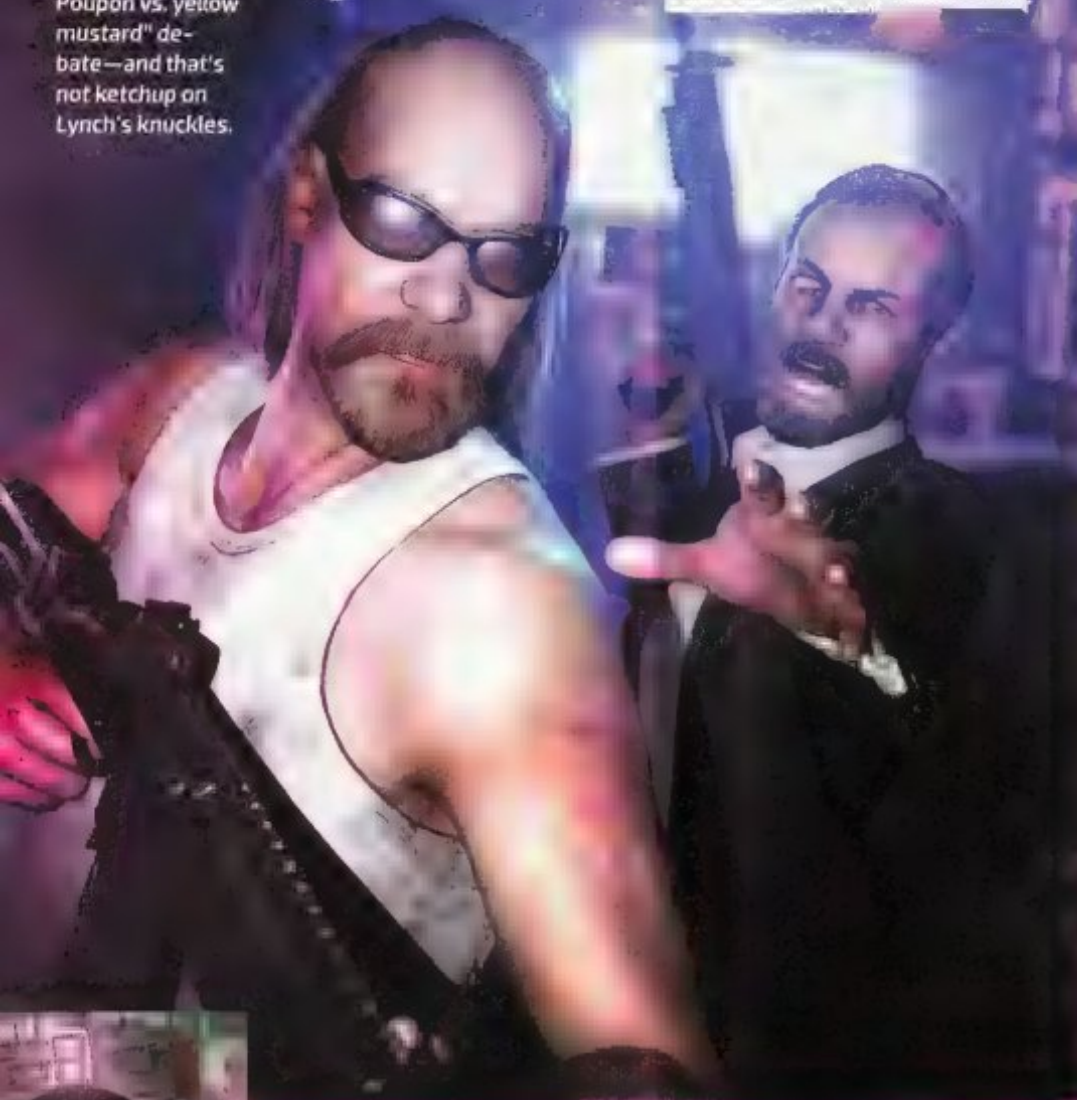
SELF-REFERENTIAL: as you shoot up Shanghai, peek at the DVD cases in the video store. Many are for other IO interactive games, like the *Hitchman* series and *Mini Ninjas*.

MYSTERY GAMING THEATER

The original *Kane & Lynch*, while not a hit with gamers, did catch the attention of some Hollywood folks, and now a movie's coming. While who's "attached" can change as quickly as a traffic light, the most recent buzz has Bruce Willis and Jamie Foxx in the title roles—though switched from what you'd expect: Foxx will play the on-edge Lynch (the game's older character), while Willis will be Kane, whose wife and daughter were kidnapped. We'll be surprised if the movie comes out before 2012.

OUTTA CONTROL

We're confident they're not having a friendly "Grey Poupon vs. yellow mustard" debate—and that's not ketchup on Lynch's knuckles.

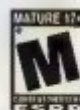


► "You're odd... [Lynch] say, 'Simon says shoot him in the back.'"



PS3 XBOX 360 PC

GAME DETAILS RATINGS



KANE & LYNCH 2: DOG DAYS

INFO

Publisher: Square Enix/Eidos
Developer: IO Interactive
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

2-player online co-op, 8-player and 12-player online competitive multiplayer modes

GENRE

Third-person shooter

RELEASE DATE

August 17, 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Lovers of good heists, gangster flicks, and inventive multiplayer



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Fantastic visual style improves the exciting campaign
- ♥ The sense that anyone could betray you during the awesome online multiplayer modes
- ♥ So many guns to choose from



WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ The main story is forgettable
- ✗ We don't get enough of Lynch's brain-damaged benders
- ✗ Too few places to keep guns



- Brutal violence
- Backstabbing buddies
- Thrilling escapes

OVERALL RATING:



4.5
/5



PS3 XBOX 360

CLASH OF THE TITANS:
THE VIDEOGAME

INFO:

Publisher: Namco Bandai
Developer: Game Republic
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360

MULTIPLAYER:

Limited two-player, same-screen
co-op (mission-specific)

GENRE:

Action-adventure

RELEASE DATE:

July 27, 2010

FOR FANS OF:

Fans of the flick looking for a little
extra action

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS

WHAT'S GREAT:

- A wide array of unlockable weapons and powers add an immense level of depth and fun to the standard button-mashing combat

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- Repetitive mission structure and botched multiplayer make for a lonely game with few notable highlights

- Gratifying combat
- Lots to unlock
- Little to do

OVERALL
RATING:2.5
/5

Gamer



Few of the film's actors return to reprise their roles. And many characters, like Hades, look different.

CLASH OF THE TITANS:
THE VIDEOGAME

Not quite a titan • Words: Mitch Dyer

We were grateful to hear that *Clash of the Titans: The Videogame* wouldn't meet the theatrical release of the film it's based on. This meant two things. First, the lack of time-sensitive obligations gave it a few more months in the oven to get things right. Second, it could expand upon what was a fun but mediocre film, rather than rigidly follow its story. This ends up as both beneficial and detrimental for *Clash of the Titans*.

There are a lot of weapons to play with in *Clash of the Titans*, and it's remarkably rewarding to earn new weapons and abilities. As you claim hammers, swords and martial-arts skills through counterattacks, your repertoire of abilities expands. Alternating between four secondary weapons and abilities during the hack-n-slash button mashing is a blast.

If it weren't for the speedy rate of rewards, we'd

have likely abandoned *Clash* after a couple of hours. Its mission structure is painfully repetitive. Often, objectives simply throw you into a restricted room with relentlessly respawning skeletons and other mythical monsters. You're occasionally allowed to explore larger areas, climb cliffsides and team up with secondary characters from the film. During these levels, a second same-screen player can take over as the teammate and assist you in combat. When the mission ends, it's back to rolling around mythical Greece yourself. This particular mission type is far too infrequent to bother bringing a pal along, and is a big missed opportunity.

Appropriately, *Clash of the Titans: The Videogame* mimics the film it's based on at a fundamental level. Both are deeply flawed and feature irritating moments and some truly terrible acting, yet the journey through the exciting adventure is an entertaining and satisfying "popcorn" experience. Just please, wipe that fake theater butter off your hands before grabbing the controller. 



TITANIC WEAPONRY

Clash of the Titans boasts 80 unlockable weapons to find throughout the game. Make an effort to disarm any enemy holding anything unfamiliar, because if you want it, it's yours.

ANDY SAYS:



I'd be lying if I said I wasn't disappointed by *Clash of the Titans*. Maybe it's because the film sucked, but the game didn't even register to me. The weapons were cool and it looked nice. I guess I'm just a purist.

SHANK

Classic beat-em-up action for a new generation • Words: Tom Price



GAMEPLAY



▲ The action in *Shank* is really over-the-top. You need to use combos to maximize the effects of your weapons.



▲ While you have a ton of weapons at your disposal we were routinely drawn to the chainsaw.

Back in the day gamers spent countless quarters playing games like *Double Dragon*, and that classic beat-em-up gameplay is at the heart of *Shank*. In *Shank* you fight your way sideways through environments that wouldn't look out of place in a graphic novel or Tarantino movie. Wielding different types of guns, melee items, and of course your ever-handly shanks, you'll fight your way along a bloody path of revenge.

The action can be very satisfying at times, and frustratingly difficult at others. While the weapons have different animations and combine into different moves, it's sometimes too easy to achieve success by mashing between the heavy and light attacks, with the occasional burst of gunfire. Boss fights do take some thinking, with each following a different pattern and taking a different tactic to beat. *Shank* definitely wears its arcade-brawler heart on its sleeve, which is good since that's the best thing the game has going for it.

ANDY COYS

Shank definitely has an old-school feel to it. It was an easy game to get into and the over-the-top gore was most definitely entertaining.



PS3 XBOX 360 PC



SHANK

INFO

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Klei Entertainment
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Local co-op

GENRE

Action

RELEASE DATE

Fall 2010

SUITABLE FOR

Side-scrolling action fans who love kicking major butt



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Frenetic action
- ♥ Lots of combos between melee and guns
- ♥ Separate narrative for co-op



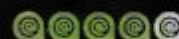
WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Bosses can be really cheap sometimes
- ✗ Your hero often gets lost in the scrum

Gamer

- Stabby
- Shooty
- Bloody

OVERALL RATING:



4/5

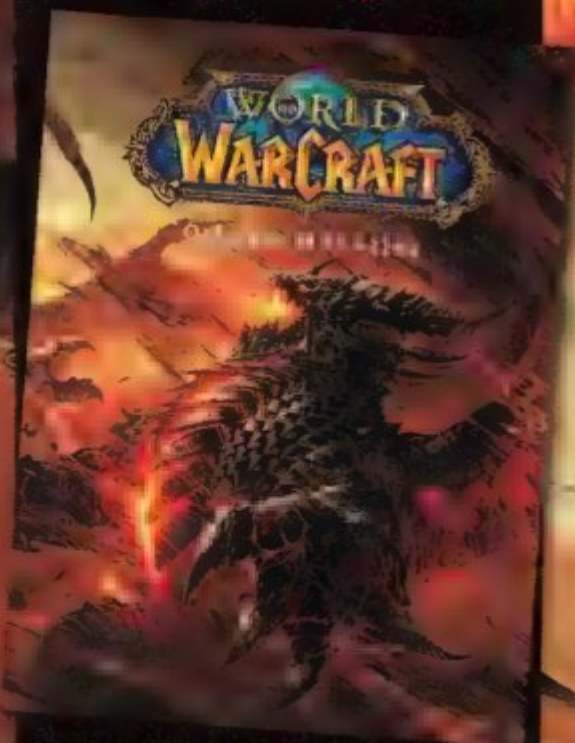


WORLD OF WARCRAFT

MAGAZINE ISSUE #2

A DARK DAWNING DRAWS NEAR

Cataclysm



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GEAR

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- 2TB Western Digital HDD
- 95 Corsair 800D Enclosure

**WIL SAYS:**

This month we decided to build the ultimate gaming rig. Of course, while we used the components you see here, the beauty of the PC is that you can easily substitute parts. If a part that you're looking for isn't available, you can use a comparable component and it should work just fine.

Where to purchase:**ONLINE OR IN-STORE**

Some of these parts are available in-store while others are available at BestBuy.com. Be sure to check with your local store for availability.

Words: Wil D'Neal • Photos: Mark Medea



INTEL CORE I7-875K PROCESSOR

Intel and AMD have been battling each other for CPU dominance for some time now. Some years they battle over raw speed, other years the battle is around flexibility and overclocking. This year, however, Intel is squarely the king of the hill with its i7-875K processor. Right out of the box the i7-875K is an amazing processor that's more flexible than AMD's Phenom II X6 1090T and performs better in both multithreaded and single-threaded apps. Imagine downloading huge files while playing a game at the same time. At around \$370 the i7-875K is a relatively good value that also overclocks well. @

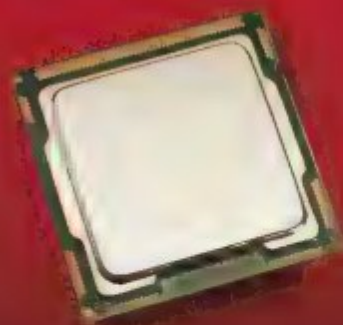
INFO

MANUFACTURER

Intel

RETAIL VALUE

\$369.99



INFO

MANUFACTURER

Corsair

RETAIL VALUE

\$79.99



CORSAIR H50 CPU COOLER

Water-cooling a CPU has historically been the business of hardcore PC gamers and techies that like to push the technological envelope. While water-cooling is a great way to make your system stable while overclocking the components, it can be both risky and daunting. Corsair's H50 CPU cooler makes this whole process a lot easier. Unlike other water-cooling

setups the H50 is a closed loop. This means you don't have to worry about maintaining fluid levels in the system. We attempted to install the H50 in two different systems and only had luck with one of them. The thing is, the H50 isn't necessarily compatible with all chipsets, so be sure that yours is supported before dropping that \$80. @



INTEL DP55WG MOTHERBOARD

When people think about building their own gaming system, typically Intel isn't the first name that comes to mind when choosing a motherboard. More often than not Asus, MSI, and EVGA jump to the fore. This doesn't mean that Intel's motherboards are no good. In fact,

they're simple and super-stable, and their DP55WG is no slouch in this regard. This motherboard features the Intel P55 Express Chipset and supports the company's latest high-end CPUs, has high-definition audio built right in, and supports multiple graphics cards. Where

the DP55WG pales in comparison to other motherboards isn't necessarily in performance, but rather in its software bundle. If you're looking to just build a basic system that works right out of the box and is super-stable you'll dig the DP55WG. **B**

INFO

MANUFACTURER

Intel
www.intel.com

RETAIL VALUE

\$149.99

This motherboard lacks the jumpers that made older installations difficult.

The DP55WG has built-in audio as well as every other port you'll ever need.



CORSAIR TX 950 POWER SUPPLY

When building your own high-end gaming rig, a good power supply is a must. That said, with the power needs of today's high-end graphics cards and CPUs you're gonna need some serious power if you're gonna get the most out of your system. We went with Corsair's TX 950 for a few reasons. While we typically prefer modular systems that give you more control

of how best to deal with the cables, we knew we'd also be using Corsair's 800D case, which has great ways of hiding the cables. That being so, we were free to go with something super-powerful and, as it turns out, surprisingly quiet. That's good, because we wanted something that didn't sound like a 747 taking off. The Corsair TX 950 delivered in this regard.

Additionally, we knew that we'd be running multiple graphics cards and multiple hard drives, as well as a Blu-ray player. Because of this, we decided on a power supply that could deliver a lot of extra juice. Of course, before buying your own supply, make doubly sure that you select one that will meet all of your power—and acoustic—needs. @

Considering how powerful this power supply is, it was strangely quiet.

Other power supplies offer better cable management. Thankfully the case let us hide all of this.



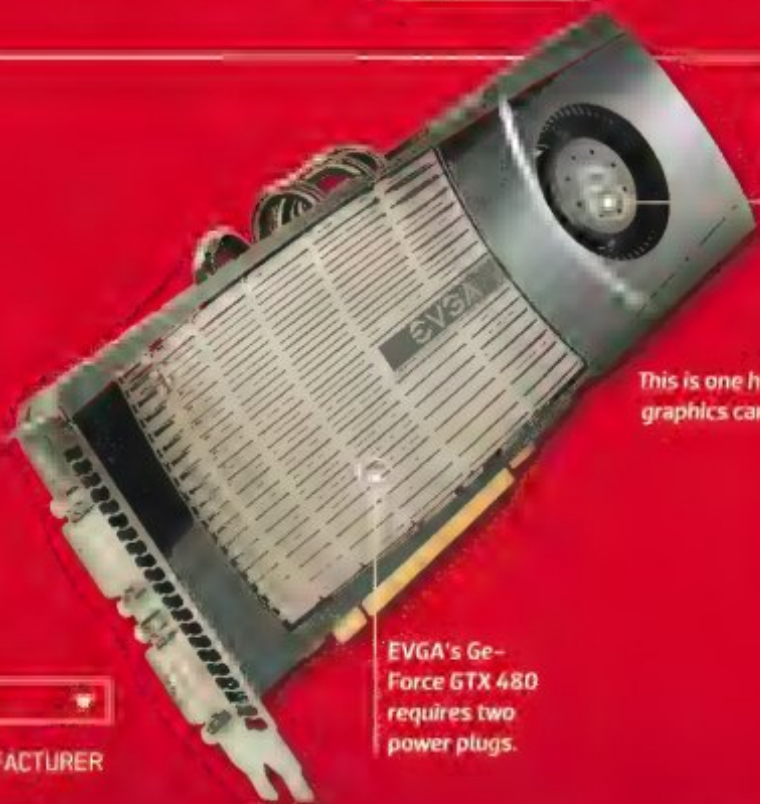
INFO

MANUFACTURER

Corsair
www.corsair.com

RETAIL VALUE

\$159.99



This is one hot graphics card.

EVGA's GeForce GTX 480 requires two power plugs.

INFO

MANUFACTURER
EVGA

www.evga.com

RETAIL VALUE
\$499.99

EVGA GEFORCE GTX 480

Last month we checked out PNY's GeForce GTX 480 and loved it. So, dropping in two EVGA GeForce GTX 480 graphics cards was a no-brainer. With 1536MB of onboard memory, these guys are monsters. Basically, the GTX 400 series of graphics processing units (GPUs) is Nvidia's fastest GPU ever and is way faster than AMD's flagship graphics card, the Radeon HD 5870. While pundits are constantly bemoaning the death of PC gaming, the gaming world just laughs at them and keeps on playing. With full DirectX 11 support the EVGA GeForce GTX 480 is a superb graphics card. And running two simultaneously in SLI (Nvidia's multiple graphics card technology) means that you'll be getting the most out of your PC games. ☺

PNY XLR8 4GB DDR3-1600

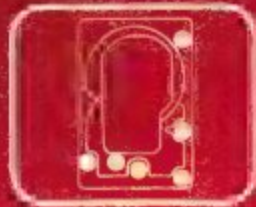
Years ago, memory could set you back about \$100 per meg. Nowadays you can get 4GB of DDR3-1600 for around \$180. With that in mind we decided to throw 4GB of PNY XLR8 DDR3-1600 into our gaming beast. The great thing about this memory is that it's easy to overclock. That said, memory is so cheap nowadays that you can easily just pack your rig with as much memory as it can handle so in some ways you don't even really have to. Of course, going forward, we could easily double the memory to 8GB if need be. While this memory was easy to overclock, it tended to be very stable. ☺

INFO

MANUFACTURER
PNY Technologies
www.pny.com

RETAIL VALUE
\$229.99





LG BH10 BLU-RAY DISC REWRITER

With so much downloadable and on-demand content, including an optical drive with a machine that you're building in 2010 feels funny. Then again, how are you gonna play all of those Blu-ray movies? When Blu-ray first came out, it was prohibitively expensive. Thankfully, that's all changed. We decided to go with LG's BH10 Blu-ray disc rewriter. Using Serial ATA technology to connect to the system, the LG BH10 was easy to set up and allows us to play Blu-ray disc movies as well as burn up to nine hours of video. Also, this Blu-ray optical drive supports LightScribe, allowing you to etch labels onto special LightScribe-compatible discs. 

INFO

MANUFACTURER

LG
www.lg.com

RETAIL VALUE

(\$179.99)



INFO

MANUFACTURER

Western Digital
www.wd.com

RETAIL VALUE

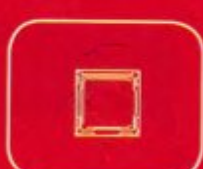
(\$229.99)



WESTERN DIGITAL 2TB CAVIAR BLACK HDD

When we decided to build our own gaming rig, we knew we would go with a two-disk RAID configuration. We just weren't sure how much disk space we'd go for. Western Digital made that choice pretty easy for us by releasing their 2TB Caviar Black hard disk drives. At around \$230 each, our machine is now rocking a massive 4TB of storage. With the addition

of our Blu-ray drive, we'll now have tons of room for HD movies and music. While getting a seriously large hard disk drive isn't really a problem, sometimes you have to sacrifice speed. This isn't the case with Western Digital's 2TB Caviar Black HDD. These drives are plenty fast and they come with utilities to aid in recovery if something bad should happen.



Corsair's 800D case is huge. But that makes it easy to work with.



CORSAIR 800D OBSIDIAN ATX CASE

Choosing a good case is an integral part of any home-built rig. While this case is super-huge, we chose it for several reasons. The sheer size, while difficult to move from place to place, gives you ample room to work with. Also, Corsair created a rather foolproof system for cable management. The case is sectioned off with holes that allow you to tuck your cables away, allowing for more airflow and heat dissipation. ©

CORSAIR CREATED A RATHER FOOLPROOF SYSTEM FOR CABLE MANAGEMENT.

INFO

MANUFACTURER
Corsair
www.corsair.com

RETAIL VALUE
\$179.99

THE VERDICT? PLENTY FAST & HOT!

Putting a system together, while it may seem daunting at first, is not as bad as most people think. Back in the day things were much more difficult. You needed a floppy drive (remember those) and you'd spend the lion's share of your time tracking down obscure drivers. Also, gone are the days of having to configure jumpers. Nowadays, anyone who knows how to use a Phillips-head screwdriver is well on their way to success. That said, building a system from the

ground up isn't always trouble-free. In building our system, we ran into one snafu. The Corsair H50 CPU cooler that we had used on a previous home-built rig wasn't compatible with the motherboard that we used so we went with Intel's stock CPU cooler. While the stock CPU cooler worked fine out of the box, we'd be less inclined to overclock the CPU having not used the water-cooled cooler.

We installed Windows 7 32-bit on the

machine and tested it with *Battlefield: Bad Company 2*, *Aliens vs. Predator*, and *DIRT 2*. We ran the games at the highest resolutions we could at 2560x1600. Check out the chart below to see how the system performed. ©

Battlefield: Bad Company 2	2560x1600	Avg. FPS: 63.5
Aliens vs. Predator	2560x1600	Avg. FPS: 63.5
DIRT 2	2560x1600	Avg. FPS: 39.5

If you have some videogame "facts" you want to verify as real or urban legend, ask Andy: Send your questions to andy@atgamer magazine.com.



What's in a name?

Stick around and we'll tell you...

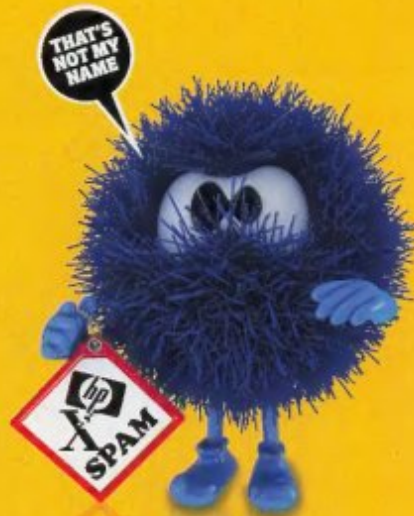
When Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard became friends and set out to create a business in the late '30s, it didn't take long to come up with the name "Hewlett-Packard." While most people today refer to it as "HP," naming a company after its founders is the easiest way to go.

In other cases the corporate label can be a tribute to—or an out-and-out description of—the product, which is why "spiced ham" is

more commonly known by the shorter, snappier name "Spam."

On the flipside, the name "Xerox" is much more cryptic, yet the company's products were so successful that its name became a verb synonymous with photocopying: "I need that contract xeroxed right away!"

This month's Truth or Lies looks at some of the game industry's big names and gets to the bottom of their origins for you.



TRUTH OR LIES:

Nintendo®

NINTENDO—DOESN'T THAT NAME HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH VIDEOGAMES?

LIES

Actually, while our recent history tells us that Nintendo has been a very successful videogame maker, its own history spans more than a century: It actually started as a playing-card company. As for its name, a company spokesperson told @GAMER: "In Japanese, the name 'Nintendo' is composed of three words—'nin ten do'—that, when translated, mean, 'We do all that we can, as best we can, and await the results.' In other words, our name is a commitment to excellence."



UBISOFT

HOW ABOUT UBISOFT? SURELY ITS NAME IS A GAME REFERENCE.

LIES

An Ubisoft spokesperson told @GAMER that the company was founded in 1986 by five brothers from Brittany, France—Claude, Michel, Yves, Gérard and Christian Guillemot. They set out to create an interactive-media business to capitalize on the success of home computers from Atari and Commodore. It was conceived as "a publishing and distribution company for fun, educational software," with its name an abbreviation of its mission: to create "ubiquitous software."



OKAY, BUT THE NAME "THQ"... NOW THAT HAS TO DO WITH GAMES SOMEHOW, RIGHT?

TRUTH

Uh, sort of. Earlier in its history, it went by T*HQ or T-HQ, which was a shortening of its full moniker, "Toy Headquarters." At some point after its videogame business really started taking off, the separator in the name was dropped, leaving the "THQ" we know today. With a catalog that includes WWE-branded wrestling titles, UFC-licensed games, the Red Faction series and the Saints Row franchise, it's hard to consider the company a "toymaker" anymore.



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*Spartan Recon Helmet available on launch day. Limited-time offer good only at participating retailers in United States while supplies last. See retailer for full details. Bungie and the Bungie logo are registered trademarks of Bungie LCC and are used with permission. All rights reserved.

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game studios

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LIVE



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MATURE 17+



Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Language
Sexual Themes
Use of Alcohol



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